remembers many of the details. But during the administration of President 000 776
Louis Borno (1922–1930) there was a reënactment of the original march. 788
There suddenly appeared in the streets of Port-au-Prince a crowd of Gèdé 643
mystères—houngans "possessed" by Gèdé Nimbo and attired in Gèdé 175
dress: tall black hats, long black tail coats, smoked glasses, black skirts over their black trousers. They carried flags, waved polka-dot kerchiefs, shook their ceremonial rattles, and paused sometimes to wipe the perspiration from one another's faces. They became the nucleus of a huge, noisy crowd moving up the hill toward the palace. Market women followed instead of going home; street gamins screamed and raced among them. Before they had arrived at the palace grounds they had taken on the semblance of a huge Mardi Gras band. They swerved through the gates of the palace grounds and along the drive, right to the steps of the palace itself. The guards, taken by surprise, waited helplessly for their officers to arrive.

At the palace door, the houngans demanded money from the president. Borno was in a dilemma. He was reputed to be sympathetic to Vodoun ritual but was only surreptitiously so. He feared the houngans, and he feared public opinion. What would the upper class of Port-au-Prince think, the Latin-culture Haitians? With Gèdé's worst manners, the Gèdé mystères cavorted on the palace steps. Finally Borno gave in. He sent the money out to them, and then the crowd of Gèdés marched out of the palace grounds, waving their flags and shaking their rattles.

SERVICE FOR THE HOUNSI BOSSALE

This ritual of calling the loa to speak through the mouth of the Vodoun 346
priest took place in the Bolosse section of Port-au-Prince. The hounfor was 796
situated in a congested slum area of the city, but the grounds around it 787
were spacious. The hounfor itself was small and unpretentious, and except for the adjoining tonnelle would easily have been mistaken for
another small wooden house. The houngan was a heavy-set man with a 793
black mustache. Quick to laugh and easy in his movements, he neverthe- 794
less commanded solemn respect from the hounsi and the other partici- 796
pants. His soft-spoken voice expressed assurance and authority. 787

There were a number of possessions in the course of the dancing, all more or less routine. Each time a possession occurred, the houngan came forward with his asson and bell, gave a pitcher of water and a candle to the possessed devotee, and conducted her through a ritual at the foot of the center post.

Later, one of the hounsi came and sat at the houngan's feet. She was not possessed but obviously was in a state of high tension. Other servitors brought from the hounfor a wooden washtub and set it on the ground

175 In the early
178 years of independence, Emperor Henry Christophe in the north and
311 President Pétion in the south tried to stem the disintegration of the
● [643] magnificent plantations. Christophe's measures in the region he con-
[656] trolled were sometimes stern, according to legend; but the plantation system and the plantations themselves gradually fell into decay, along with the aqueducts, the warehouses, and the sugar mills. For the Haitian had returned to a tradition of landholding antedating his enslavement.

175 Europe's loss of the Pearl of the Antilles aroused bitter words from
648 Frenchmen and Englishmen for the better part of the century. They
181 accused the Negro of laziness and lack of ability, repeating endlessly that only as a colony could Haiti ever be of any use to anybody. The London *Times* deplored the Haitian's unwillingness to work for wages, speculating that he had "no desire for property strong enough to induce him to labor with sustained power." In the United States, antiabolitionist enthusiasts cited the Haitian situation as an example of what would happen to the American economy if the slaves were freed.

464 The Haitian's reluctance to work for wages did not reflect an aversion
423 to owning property, however, as the London *Times* supposed. On the
311 contrary, it was engendered by his desire for property. The land was there and waiting, only needing a house to be built upon it, and to be cleared and tilled. The typical Haitian wanted not dubious, seasonal wage work but a farm of his own. The more ambitious peasant aspired to two farms, or even three, with a homestead and a family on each.

423 If a man worked hard and made a success of one plot, he could put
595 away money and eventually buy a second. The additional land might be
178 separated by some miles from the original farm. On the new ground
583 the man would build another house and take another wife to take care of it in his absence. Known as *plaçage,* this arrangement had complete community sanction. A man whose energies and good fortune made an extra household possible was expected to make such an arrange-
[997] ment. It was not a new institution bred in the chaos following the Revolution, nor was it, as some missionaries held, an evidence of moral deterioration of the Haitian character. It was simply a persisting concept of West African life.[2] The woman who occupied the second or third household was not a concubine. Like the first wife, she had enhanced prestige in her community. She had authority and responsibility. Her work, her position, and her rewards were not essentially different from those of the first wife.[3] It is true that her marriage was not consecrated by a church or civil ceremony, but, ordinarily, neither was that of the
[581] first wife. Contrary to European misconceptions, such unions were true marriages in the sense that they had full sanction of the community.

2, 3 [Footnotes appear in Category 116, pp. 351-352. -- Analyst]

[P.148]

13. Comments on the Mighty: Political Songs

* 533 The African-style song of social criticism has found no worthier sub-
538 jects than the historic political figures of Haiti. There is no doubt that
626 the African slaves used this art form to express their feelings toward
178 the white masters as they had used it to comment upon the behavior of
their own chiefs and fellow tribesmen. The worthy leaders were praised
in song; the unworthy were castigated and their sins, failures, and
social misdemeanors publicized in folk songs. By the beginning of the
[567] nineteenth century, slavery had come to an end in Haiti. The deep
democratic sense of human dignity had outlasted the colonial masters
and emerged tempered and sharp. The songs of criticism became not
* 533 only comments upon political figures but campaign propaganda as well.
538 They dwelt upon the accomplishments or faults of the candidates for
626 political office. Friendly songs sought out every virtue, and invented
178 others, in the man or woman being praised. Unfriendly songs lashed
666 out and lacerated or poked biting fun at the subject, not even sparing
his physical deformities.

* 533 Yet the political songs are more than statements of merit or fault.
538 Cumulatively they are a kind of folk history of Haiti. No political
[666] aspirant ever went unsung by his peasant army, or unridiculed by his
opponent's followers. The songs the people sang about their heroes and
[178] their enemies recall events and details that formal history has forgotten
or ignored. The memory of the folk song is powerful and long. Some of
the recollections go back more than a century.

175 History books tell us that in December, 1843, Major Charles Hérard
642 aîné Rivière was elected to the office of the presidency, and that a new
[643] constitution was drawn up by the Constituent Assembly. The new constitution was an accomplishment of the liberal and democratic forces
of the nation. It guaranteed certain civil rights to the people. It provided
that judges be elected instead of appointed, abolished life terms for

presidents, and emphatically declared the army to be within and under the law. 175 642

The new President, finding his office without the prerogatives he had 175 expected it to have, openly complained of the restraints imposed on him 643 by the new constitution. He broke campaign promises he had made to 669 the peasants in the south and stirred up antagonisms on every side. Finally, while he was on a military expedition in the Spanish part of the island, revolution broke out at home. His army was beaten by the [648] Dominicans~~, too, which~~ completely shattered his morale. He fled by ship to Jamaica, the traditional refuge of outgoing Haitian presidents. In 175 memory of his administration the peasants sang: 643 669 533* 539*

Rivière Président gainyain zyeux vairon!
Li dit l'ap piyé l'armé Bélanton!
Piyé lévé trésor!
Piyé lévé trésor!
Piyé lévé trésor!
Yo voyé Lambam depuis Lowinsor!

La Constitution cé trouva Colombe
Quand yo voit pays soufri trop misère!
Li dit yo fait comme Henry!
Li dit yo fait comme Henry!
Li dit yo fait comme Henry!
Pou' fai sang coulé pou' rangé pays!

Colonel Déro soldat Diplaro
Marché fanfaron comme un grand fantin!
Li cré qui li té roi!
Li cré qui li té roi!
Li cré qui li té roi!
'Pagnol chasse li, li couri con chien qui prend frai charogne!

President Rivière was cross-eyed!
He said that he was going to pillage Belanton's army!
Loot for treasure!
Loot for treasure!
Loot for treasure!
They sent everyone from Lowinsor to Lambam!

The Constitution was founded by Columbus
When the country suffered too much misery!
He said he would do like Henry [Christophe]!
He said he would do like Henry!
He said he would do like Henry!
Make blood run to poison the countryside!

175

● 643 From Colonel Déro to Private Diplaro,
669 They marched with fanfare, a great army of foot soldiers!
He thought that he was king!
*533 He thought that he was king!
*539 He thought that he was king!
The Spaniards chased him, he ran like a dog after fresh carrion!

175 579 666 626 Forty-five years later, in 1888, there was a big political rally in Port-au-Prince. The two presidential candidates were General Séide Télémaque and Déus Légitime. Their supporters clashed near the palace, and Télémaque was killed in an exchange of gunfire. Légitime naturally was accused of having murdered his rival, though his supporters would not believe that he had committed such a crime. Evidence for a trial was entirely lacking, and Déus Légitime became president. But feeling ran high, and the followers of Télémaque began to sing: *[533]

*[539]
Écoutez chers amis l'histoire de Légitime!
Assassin de Séide, et lui est président!
Écoutez bien l'histoire, le gens du nord marchaient
Sur Port-au-Prince un fois pou' vengé la mort de Séide!
Allez au diable, bandit Déus!
Échappez vous, ingrat Déus!
Si vous perdre le temps, Déus,
Florvil vous feura fusillé!

Listen my friends to the story of Légitime!
Assassin of Séide, and he is President!
Listen well to the story, the people of the north will march
On Port-au-Prince one day to avenge the death of Séide!
Go to the devil, bandit Déus!
Escape, ingrate Déus!
If you lose time, Déus,
Florvil will have you shot!

Légitime had this possibility clearly in his mind. And the next year, [669] when Florvil Gélin Hippolyte marched from the north with an army of *cacos* (peasant troops who hired out to political aspirants), Légitime hurriedly boarded a steamer in the harbor and sailed for Jamaica. Séide Télémaque was considered avenged, as the army bugles still bear witness. For now when the bugle plays reveille it is supposed to be saying:

*[539]
Séide Télémaque, Légitime has fled!
Séide Télémaque, Légitime has fled!

175, 643 The new President, Florvil Hippolyte, died in office in 1896. J. N. Leger, a Haitian historian, tells soberly of Hippolyte's end in the following words.

For some time the President, who was sixty-nine years old, had not been in good health, and disregarding the friendly warning of those who were interested in his welfare he refused to give up his hard work and to take the rest of which he was in sore need. Against the advice of his doctor he decided to undertake a long journey to Jacmel. He started on the 24th of March, 1896, at three o'clock in the morning, but before he even had time to leave Port-au-Prince, he fell from his horse dead in a fit of apoplexy, at a short distance from the executive mansion.[1] 175 643

The legend of Hippolyte's death passed on in song is not nearly so dispassionate. It is told that Hippolyte was going out on a drastic punitive trip to Jacmel, where there were rumblings of political opposition and revolution. Among other things, the President was going to seize the powerful Voduun priest Mérisier, regarded as a powerful force in the opposition. Hippolyte also had sworn to reduce Jacmel to ashes and wipe out the entire population except one male and one female to repopulate the land. As he prepared to leave on his mission, his wife and his son stood by the door to see him off. 533* 539* 173 643

Li lévé Mardi bon matin, Li fai sélé cheval à li. En montant sa cheval li, Panama li sorti tombé.	He arose early on Tuesday morning, He saddled his horse. As he climbed on his horse, His hat came off and fell.
L'Hérison rélé "Papa," Li dit'l, "Papa à moin, Panama ou sorti tombé, Cé déjà youn mauvais signal."	L'Hérison * called out, "Papa!" He said to him, "Father, Your hat has come off and fallen. That is already a bad omen."
Li répond ni, "Pitit à moin, Moin déjà met' l'armée déhors, L'armée moin déjà nan portaille. Y faudra que moin parti."	He replied to him, "My child, I have already sent the army ahead, My army is already at the city gate, I have to go."
Arrivé sou Pont Gentil, Li tombé sans connaisance. Yo voyé rélé Doctor Jules, "Vin sauver Florvil Gélin!"	Arrived at Pont Gentil, He fell unconscious. They sent for Dr. Jules, "Come to save Florvil Gélin."
Doctor Jules tomba à genoux. Li rélé Manman Ste Anne, Li rélé St. Augustin, "Vine sauver Florvil Gélin!"	Dr. Jules fell on his knees. He called Mother St. Anne, He called St. Augustin, "Come to save Florvil Gélin!"
Ste Anne dit, " 'l faut mouri." St. Augustin dit, " 'l faut mouri." Li rélé St. Jacques Majeur "Vine sauver Florvil Gélin!"	St. Anne said, "He has to die." St. Augustin said, "He has to die." He called St. Jacques Majeur, "Come to save Florvil Gélin."

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* Hippolyte's son.

[1] [Léger, Haiti, Her History and Her Detractors. Cf. p.353, Category 116. --Analyst]

*533 Mérisier rété Jacmel,	Mérisier waited at Jacmel.
*539 Li souqué baksor à li.	He shook his sacred rattle.
173 Li conné ça qui gainyain.	He knew what was going on.
●643 Tout ti trou déjà bouché!	All the small holes were filled.*
Victoire dit con ça,	Victoire said
Quand Florvil ta va mourit	When Florvil dies
Li tap fai youn belle soirée	She will hold a beautiful party
Avec tout ti gens la yo.	With all the young people.
CHORUS	CHORUS
En allé Dodo!	We are going to dance! †
En allé Dodo!	We are going to dance!
En allé ce soir	We are going this evening
Caille la belle Victoire!	To the house of beautiful Victoire! ‡

The legend of Hippolyte's falling hat is preserved in another folk song called "Panama'm Tombé":

Panama'm tombé,	My hat fell down,
Panama'm tombé,	My hat fell down,
Panama'm tombé; ça qui dèyè	My hat fell down; whoever is behind,
Ramaisé li ba moin!	Pick it up for me!

*533 Mérisier, the Vodoun priest whom Hippolyte regarded as an enemy,
*539 was not pleased with the rumors and talk about him that was going the
173 rounds in the capital. His displeasure is recorded in a protest song with
643 a familiar theme:
793

Mérisier yo vini ga'dé moin pou' y'allé pa'lé, wo wa é!
Mérisier yo vini ga'dé ça pou' y'allé pa'lé ça!
Kénan moin yo wè!
Kénan yo séré nan mal!
Mérisier pas là, sonné ochan wa wa é!

Mérisier [says] they come to see me to go away and talk, *wo wa é!*
Mérisier [says] they come to see it and go away to talk about it!
What is mine you see!
What is yours you evilly hide!
Mérisier isn't there, sound the salute, *wa wa é!*

173 Seven days after Hippolyte's death, General Simon Sam was elected
643 to the presidency. His friends and his enemies had different things to say
*533 about him. One song makes a tart comment on Sam's administration.
*539

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* That is, the affair was finished.

† *Allé dodo* literally means "to go to sleep," but there was a dance called Allé Dodo.

‡ Hippolyte's young wife.

173
643
533*
539*

A la youn président,
C'est Tirésius Augustin Simon Sam.
Si tout té con ça,
Haiti ta fini! [Ex. 111]

There was a president,
He was Tirésius Augustin Simon Sam.
If they were all like him,
Haiti would be finished!

175
643

In 1902 General Nord Alexis became the chief executive of Haiti. His abilities and accomplishments are still being debated, but he appears to have been a rather lovable old man whom everyone called by the affectionate term Uncle. His administration was fairly stable and prosperous—as prosperity is known in Haiti—and in large measure peaceful. When his election was confirmed, the people were convinced that the nation was in for a period of law and order, and that the constant threat of cacos and brigandage would come to an end. One of the election-year songs goes:

[533]*
[539]*

Nous crions vive, c'est pou' l'armé du Nord!
Tintin cila ça va fini!
Nous crions vive, c'est pou' soldats du Nord!
Tintin cila ça va fini!
Tintin cila, tintin cila, tintin cila va fini!
Bassin Vodoun, Bassin Vodoun, Bassin Vodoun c'est pou' nous! [Ex. 112]

We cry long live Nord's army!
The chaos will be ended!
We cry long live Nord's soldiers!
The chaos will be ended!
The chaos, the chaos, the chaos will be ended!
Bassin Vodoun,* Bassin Vodoun, Bassin Vodoun is for us!

175
643
652

One of the serious problems confronting Nord Alexis after his election was that of a disappearing national currency. Haitian paper money was circulating elsewhere in the West Indies and in South America and was becoming increasingly scarce in Haiti itself. Nord Alexis called in all the old currency and issued new, with the happy result that large quantities of money were again seen in the Republic. The common people who made the songs seem to have been very grateful:

[533]*
[539]*

Alexis Nord Papa ou bon chef oh!
Ou ba nous moné, ou ba nous papier!
Alexis Nord Papa ou bon chef oh!
Ou ba nous moné, ou ba nous papier!

---

*Probably a place name.

175 Nous pas mandé ou anyien!
● 643 Nous pas mandé l'a'gent enco'!
652 Papa Nord ça nous ta mandé oh chef,
*533 C'est bamboche nous mandé ou! [Ex. 113]
*539

Alexis Nord, Papa, you are a good chief, oh!
You gave us money, you gave us paper!
Alexis Nord, Papa, you are a good chief, oh!
You gave us money, you gave us paper!
We don't ask you for anything more!
We don't ask you again for money!
Papa Nord, only one thing we are going to ask you, chief,
It is a big celebration we ask for!

643 The president's wife, Çéçé, seems to have been very proud of him
644 and very sure of his talents. When the army bugles blow a general assembly
*533 call, they are supposed to be saying:
*539

Çéçé té dit Alexis Nord grand moune nan tout corps li!
Çéçé té dit Alexis Nord grand moune nan tout corps li!
Çéçé té dit la quitté pour voir l'heure li vlé!
Çéçé té dit Tonton Nord grand moune nan tout corps li! [Ex. 114]

Çéçé said Alexis Nord is a thoroughly fine man!
Çéçé said Alexis Nord is a thoroughly fine man!
Çéçé said he will quit his office whenever he sees fit!
Çéçé said Uncle Nord is a thoroughly fine man!

Another bugle call, with words attributed to Nord's wife, contains a note of complaint:

Çéçé said *waille!*
Çéçé said that, said that!
Çéçé said if you don't have any money you can't have a woman!
Çéçé said *waille!*
Çéçé said that, said that!
Çéçé said we are working our guts out!
Çéçé said *waille!*
Çéçé said that, said that!
Çéçé said Alexis Nord is president!

643 Çéçé was not the only one in Haiti who had confidence in Nord's
*533 staying power. One popular song of the period goes:
*539

Alexis Nord Papa,
Bondieu qui metté ou là!
Consolidé là yo
Qui vlé ba ou traka!

643

Alexis Nord, c'un bon Papa! 533*
Ou pas metté ou pas manyien! 539*
Pinga ou manyien, pinga ou manyien!
Pinga ou manyien Alexis Nord! [Ex. 115]

Alexis Nord, Papa,
It is God who put you there!
Take care of those
Who wish to make trouble for you!

Alexis Nord is a good papa!
You didn't put him there, you can't take him away!
Don't try to remove him, don't try to remove him!
Don't try to remove Alexis Nord!

Nord Alexis remained as president until 1909. He was then more than eighty years old, and he planned to turn the government over to General Jean-Gilles, who would carry on the policies of the administration. But Antoine Simon, an assembly delegate from the south, had other plans. He marched on Port-au-Prince with an army of three hundred cacos, who sang: 175 643 669 [533]* [539]*

Tonton oh cher, Antoine pas nen betise oh!
L'apprend l'armée du sud, cher,
L'a fai ou marché zigzag!
Débor débor débor!
Nèg' Nord mandé fusillé!
Débor débor débor!
Nèg' Nord mandé corigé!

Dear Uncle, Antoine is not joking!
He brings the army of the south, my friend,
He will make you go zigzag.
*Débor débor débor!**
Nord's men are asking for gunfire!
Débor débor débor!
Nord's men are asking for a lesson!

After Nord Alexis had vacated the palace and embarked for Jamaica, Antoine Simon became president. Historians often refer to the period that followed as the "Epoch of Ephemeral Presidents." Simon was not in the palace long before a man named Cincinnatus Leconte was successfully stirring up a new caco movement in the north, and people were singing: [533]* [539]*

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* Probably "unflinched."

Antoine Simon paré oh pou' allé!
Ou pas tendé l'armée Leconte Gonaïves? [Ex. 116]

Antoine Simon, you'd better leave!
Haven't you heard Leconte's army is at Gonaïves?

In August, 1912, Leconte marched on the capital, and Antoine Simon sailed for Jamaica. General Leconte was duly elected to the presidency; but less than a year after he took office a terrific explosion wrecked the palace, killing Leconte, his son, and a number of militia. It was believed by many that this disaster was an act of vengeance by Antoine Simon:

Cloches sonnin, m'mandé ça qui gainyain
C'est Chapuzette qui débandé encore.
Maribaroux mim li vini encore,
Ça'l vin' chaché, li vin' mandé revanche.

Nan Ouanaminthe fusil pas té tiré,
Qui raison ça pou' yo té fait pillage?
Bourriques, mulet' jusqu'à feuilles tôle, Chapuzette,
Tout ça passé au prix de trois centimes.

Machetes Leconte pis raide passé jalap,
C'est avec ça Chapuzette bai médicine.
Si ou vlé connaî comment bai "vent-main-vers,"
Mandé Oreste avec Antoine Simon.

Antoine Simon té dit avant'l parti,
Li ta va quitté yun bomb nan mitan yo.
Lè l'éclaté, lè-à li va Kingston,
La mandé rein'l pou'l ti peuple souverain.

Aux Cayes du Fond m'tendé Mapou Simon,
Nan Léogane m'tendé Mapou Dauphine.
Lè nou rivé nu wè ça qui gainyain,
Cassis courri cassis, Antoine viré son dos.

REFRAIN

Honneur à Chapuzette, St. Juste avec Delphin,
Ducasse et Corvoisier, vive Cincinatus.

The bells ring, I ask what is going on?
It is Chapuzette now who has revolted.
But Maribaroux he comes again,
What he is looking for is revenge.

In Ouanaminthe the guns are quiet,
What was the reason for this pillage?
They have carried off the donkeys, mules, and even the iron roofing,
Everything that was worth more than three centimes.

Leconte's soldiers are stronger than a *jalap*,* 195
It is with them that Chapuzette gives medicine. 643 ●
If you want to know how to give the "stomach-hand-nose" † 669
Ask Oreste and Antoine Simon. 533*

Antoine Simon said before he left 539*
That he would leave a bomb in the middle of the palace.
When it went off he was already in Kingston.
He will pay for laughing at a sovereign people.

In Aux Cayes du Fond, I heard of the Mapou Simon,
In Léogane I heard of the Mapou Dauphine
When we arrive there we'll see what will happen.
Band contre band,‡ Antoine will turn over on his back.

REFRAIN

Honor to Chapuzette, St. Juste and Delphin,
Duconge and Corvoisier, long live Cincinnatus.

Two more presidents—Tancrede Auguste and Michele Oreste—divided the next eighteen months between them. Two caco movements to remove Oreste started simultaneously, one under the leadership of Davilmar Théodore, the other under the Zamor brothers, Charles and Oreste. The Zamor cacos first chased Théodore's army into the mountains and then marched on the capital. Oreste Zamor was elected to the presidency on a reform program, which quickly evaporated into thin air. One song describes the arrival of the President's brother Charles and his "Réform" at the gates of Port-au-Prince, where a crowd of enthusiasts had gathered: [868]

Attention la Réform c'est jeunes jens Port-au-Prince,
C'est jeunes jens Port-au-Prince, la Réform viré dos ba yo.
Yo lévé Mardi bon matin, l'habillé tout en blanc,
L'habillé tout en blanc pou' y'al contré Charles Zamor.
Al entrée Port-au-Prince la Réform dévirée,
La Réform dévirée, la Réform viré dos ba yo.

Hail the Reform! It is the young men of Port-au-Prince,
The young men of Port-au-Prince, and the Reform turns its back on them.
They arose early Tuesday morning, dressed all in white,
They dressed all in white to meet Charles Zamor.
At the gates of Port-au-Prince the Reform reversed itself,
The Reform reversed itself and turned its back on them.

The Zamors and the reform administration held the palace less than nine months before Davilmar Théodore's cacos were marching on the capital singing the song that other presidents had heard.

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* A violent purgative.
† That is, upset stomach, hand on the nose.
‡ That is, force replies to force.

175 Oreste Zamor, pressé pou' embarké!
● 643 Oreste Zamor, pressé pou' embarké!
229 Ou pas tendé l'armée Davilmar rentré pou' Gonaïves?
269
* 533 Oreste Zamor, you'd better embark!
* 539 Oreste Zamor, you'd better embark!
Haven't you heard Davilmar's army has entered Gonaïves?

Gonaïves seems to have been the crucial point for invading armies from the north. Whenever revolutionary troops entered this town, the president holding office prepared to leave. True to the tradition, the Zamors sailed for a foreign shore, and Davilmar Théodore became the new executive. Although his tenure was to last only three months, there was much excitement when he entered the capital:

À la théatre, à la bamboche!
Pou' djolle musique à droit à gauche!
La ville embrende ça qui gainyain,
C'est Davilmar kapé rentré!
Davilmar, dur, dur!
Manchete caco pas nen betise!
Papa Da dur, dur!
Manchete Leconte pas nen betise!
Davilmar, dur, dur!

Celebrations and dancing!
Tooting horns to right and left!
The city is in an uproar,
It is Davilmar who is coming in!
Davilmar, hard, hard!
The *cacos* were nothing to laugh at!
Papa Da is hard, hard!
Leconte's army was nothing to laugh at!
Davilmar is hard, hard!

175 In 1915 came the United States intervention in Haiti, with the prime
648 objective of freezing out German commercial and political interests. A
[662] president named Guillaume Sam had assassinated his political enemies
in the prison at Port-au-Prince and had, in turn, been dragged out of
the French consulate and killed. The benefits of the American occupation of Haiti are hotly debated to this day, though it is about thirty years since the United States military forces were withdrawn. Some Haitians think the occupation was a good lesson in politics, and that Haiti benefited in many ways. Others continue to look upon it as an overt expression of American diplomacy by force. One of the early assignments of the U.S. Marines in Haiti was the destruction of the

roaming bands of cacos, generally regarded as bandit elements. Caco 175
chiefs were imprisoned or killed as outlaws, though much of their 648
activity was directed against the American occupation rather than the civil government. Many of the injustices of the occupation were the result of inadequate understanding of the Haitian people and their way of life. There was much unspoken bitterness against the occupation 175
forces, and in some popular songs the Marines were referred to by the 648
peaceful peasantry as "cacos in khaki." During President Borno's ad- 533*
ministration the people in the north were singing: 539*
643●

Grand Prevost ou pas tendé cacos Bayé Bouteille?
Grand Prevost n'allé wè cacos Bayé Bouteille!
Ala kilé nou dé nations:
Americains dévant, cacos deuxième!

Grand Prevost, didn't you hear the cacos are at the Battle Gate?
Grand Prevost, we are going to see the cacos at the Battle Gate!
Now we have two species:
The Americans are the worst, the cacos come second!

When President Borno's tenure of office came to an end, it was felt 175
in some quarters that Madame Borno was taking the prospective change 643
of residence very hard: 644
533*
539*

Madame Borno ça ou gainyain ou apé crié?
Ou té tou conné palais a parti pou' ou!
Madame Borno ça ou gainyain ou apé crié?
Ou té tou conné yun jour pou' ou' laissé!

Madame Borno, what is the matter, why are you crying?
You always knew one day you would have to leave the palace!
Madame Borno, what is the matter, why are you crying?
You always knew one day you'd have to give it up!

In 1930 Sténio Vincent came into office. He was a generally un- 175
popular executive who managed to hold on to the presidency by sup- 643
pressing the political opposition. When he was elected, the progressives 669
were hopeful, and his supporters were singing: "Sténio Vincent bon garçon." But public sentiment shifted. Times were hard for the Haitian people during the Vincent administration. The darker citizens felt Vincent was "too light" to have their interests at heart. They were violently aroused, too, by his gingerly handling of the massacre of Haitians in the Dominican Republic in 1937. During his administration there were a number of abortive caco demonstrations and an unsuccessful revolt of high-ranking army officers. But in the early days a Meringue oro

But in the early days Merengue

195
643 piece called "Merci Papa Vincent" was very popular. According to the
533 song, the noteworthy achievement of the President was the law he
539 sponsored to drive the "Syrians" out of the retail trades:
563
444

Nous conné moune qui raimé peuple là,
C'est Président Vincent!
Nous conné moune qui raimé peuple là,
C'est Président Vincent!
Nous conné moune qui raimé peuple là,
C'est Président Vincent!
Nous conné moune qui raimé peuple,
C'est Président Vincent!
A nous rélé, merci Papa Vincent!
A nous rélé, merci Papa Vincent!
A nous crié, merci Papa Vincent!

Qui moune qui bai commerce en detail là?
C'est Président Vincent!
Qui moune qui bai commerce en detail là?
C'est Président Vincent!
Qui moune qui bai commerce en detail là?
C'est Président Vincent!
A nous rélé, merci Papa Vincent!
A nous rélé, merci Papa Vincent!

We know the man who loves the people,
He is President Vincent!
We know the man who loves the people,
He is President Vincent!
We know the man who loves the people,
He is President Vincent!
We know the man who loves the people,
He is President Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!

Who is the man who gave us the retail business?
It is President Vincent!
Who is the man who gave us the retail business?
It is President Vincent!
Who is the man who gave us the retail business?
It is President Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!

175 This song soon became the "official" musical theme of the President and
178 was heard in the carnival festivities, at salon dances, and at military
643 functions. But as discontent with Vincent grew, less adulatory versions
533
539

of "Merci Papa Vincent" sprang up in the side streets of Port-au-Prince. One rendition (as translated) went:

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178 ●
643
533*
539*

We know the man who loves the people,
He is Sténio Vincent!
Who made my wife leave me to go to her family?
He is Président Vincent!
Who made my skin show through my worn out pants?
He is Président Vincent!
Who is the man who made my house fall down?
He is Président Vincent!
Oh, we call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!

So widespread did the burlesques on the original become that the tune itself became suspect. One never knew which versions were running through the minds of the listeners.

In 1950, during the administration of President Estimé, there was a new public works program which provided employment for a good many needy people in the Port-au-Prince area, and a coumbite song of the period went:

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643
533*
539*
[653]

Président Estimé waille, oh!
Quembé pays yà pas lagué oh!
C'est Bondieu nans ciel là qui ba moin président!
C'est Bondieu nans ciel là qui ba moin président cila!
Quembé pays yà pas lagué oh!
Port-au-Prince oh tourné Havane oh! [Ex. 117]

President Estimé *waille*, oh!
Hold on to the country, don't let go, oh!
It is God in heaven who gave me this president!
It is God in heaven who gave me this president!
Hold on to the country, don't let go, oh!
Port-au-Prince, oh, is turning into a Havana, oh!

When Estimé was overthrown by a military coup, the melody lingered on, but the name of the protagonist was changed. [669]

No president of Haiti has served his term of office, either for good or bad, without providing the raw materials for a folk song. His heroic deeds, his failures, and his foibles are as likely as not to be perpetuated in the music of the people.

643
533*

As for the presidency itself, it is held in the highest esteem. A rousing salute song, reminiscent of the Marseillaise, sends every new president-elect on the way to the palace: [539]*

Président passé là,
L'ap monté au gouvernement!

● 643
*533
*539

Président passé là,
L'ap monté au gouvernement! [Ex. 118]

The President passes by,
He is taking over the government!
The President passes by,
He is taking over the government!

*533 758 646 It is not only great political events that are perpetuated in songs like these; many are the comments on little people in the government, such as a legislator named Daniel Fignolé. One of Fignolé's deeds, probably apocryphal, which is recorded in folk song has to do with an act of justice in a hospital in Port-au-Prince. According to the song, Fignolé entered the hospital and found the rich patients on beds and the poor patients on mats on the floor. He promptly ordered the rich patients placed on the floor and the poor patients placed on the beds. (A few [643] years later, after serving as president for less than three weeks, Fignolé became a political exile in the United States.)

*533 499 496 There is also an old song about a government engineer named Louis Gentil Tippenhauer—or Ti 'Benhauer (Little 'Benhauer), as he was commonly known. Tippenhauer is now an old man, but when he was young he was in charge of the construction of a section of the Haitian narrow-gauge railway. There was an accident in which a smoking locomotive jumped the tracks. Though small in stature, Tippenhauer had a forceful personality. He quickly assembled his workmen, and with chains, ropes, and crowbars they wrestled the locomotive back on the rails. The song commemorating the dramatic event was born at the height of the rescue operation. It is marked with concern for the feelings of Engineer Tippenhauer:

*[539]

Ti 'Benhauer rélé, "Porté cord pou' marré li!"
Ti 'Benhauer rélé, "Porté chaine pou' enchainé li!"
Si ou marré'l la laguè, devant Bondieu!
Pau' diab', pau' 'Benhauer, machine na deraillé!
Pau' diab', pau' 'Benhauer, machine na deraillé!

Ti 'Benhauer shouts, "Bring a rope to tie it!"
Ti 'Benhauer shouts, "Bring a chain to chain it!"
If you tie it, it unties itself, before God!
Poor devil, poor 'Benhauer, the machine is derailed!
Poor devil, poor 'Benhauer, the machine is derailed!

It is more than half a century since the affair of the derailed locomotive, and the railroad itself is not much longer for this world. But the song is still sung, and mostly by people who have no personal knowledge of the man named Tippenhauer.

[P. 163]

14. Songs of Bravado and Boasting

Among the secular songs are many which have boasting, bravado, or 533*
challenges as their central theme. Usually this kind of song is playful in 538
tone, though sometimes there may be a serious or even an ominous undercurrent. Often the challenges are directed toward, or concern, djabs and *démons*. Just as often they involve persons of great prestige and power, perhaps the president himself. These songs say, in effect, "Who's afraid of the lou-garo?"—or of the president, or of the demon of such-and-such a mountain, as the case may be. Sometimes the bravado motif is implicit, but as often as not the singer challenges the world to take him before some feared personage, human or supernatural, and see what will happen.

In one such song, the singer boasts that he is ready to be conducted be- 533*
fore a fearful and malevolent deity named Jean Zombie. As though to 539*
assure the listeners that he is in his right mind, the challenger emphasizes 775
that he has *not* been drinking anything intoxicating and is perfectly sober:

Rwo! Jean Zombie oh vini wè moin, conduit'm allé!
Rwo! Jean Zombie oh vini wè moin, conduit'm allé!
M'pas bwè tafia pou' nou fait tintin!
Devant hounfor moin conduit'm allé!
Jean Zombie oh wié wa conduit'm allé!
M'pas bwè tafia pou' nou fait tintin! [Ex. 119]

Rwo! Jean Zombie, oh, comes to see me, take me to him!
Rwo! Jean Zombie, oh, comes to see me, take me to him!
I haven't drunk tafia, I am not drunk!
I am at my hounfor, take me to him!
Jean Zombie, oh wie wa, take me to him!
I haven't drunk tafia, I am not drunk!

Another song challenges the community to take the singer to face the 533*
president—right into the president's parlor. The fact that the president 539*
643●

*533 *539 named in the song has been dead for years does not seem to matter very
●643 much:

Mèné'm allé oh parleur!	Take me to the parlor!
Mèné'm allé!	Take me!
Mèné'm allé!	Take me!
Mèné'm allé oh parleur Borno!	Take me to Borno's parlor!
Mèné'm allé oh! [Ex. 120]	Take me, oh!

*533 Sometimes the challenge is directed to a more lowly level of authority,
*539 such as the gendarme:
625

Gendarme, mèné'm nan bureau!
Rwo, gendarme oh! [Ex. 121]

Gendarme, take me to the police station!
Rwo, gendarme, oh!

152 Haitians are notable for their restraint from physical violence. During
683 holiday celebrations it is not uncommon to see men who have drunk
579 enough tafia to make them act up. Some of them may even be morose and
[183] bellicose. But the disturbances of the peace more often than not are verbal.
[626] So long as the first blow is not struck, the social pressures against violence operate effectively. But physical assault against an individual—a push, a blow, a slap—is an affront to personal dignity which relieves the victim of the social restraints and gives him the right to bodily revenge. I have seen waterfront rows, fierce and vocal, in which no one but the participants showed much interest. But should one man shove or strike another, the spectators would immediately interfere, for that single physical contact would have removed the barriers to the worst violence. Sometimes at carnival time a man assumes the guise of belligerence. Such a bully may roll up one trouser leg to indicate he is challenging all and sundry to a fight. Usually, passers-by move aside good-naturedly when he approaches. He is not taken seriously; but neither is he challenged, except by another man in the same frame of mind. When two men with rolled trouser legs meet, there may be a verbal encounter, possibly from opposite sides of the street, to the general entertainment of the bystanders. It is usually a serio-
*533 comic affair. Some of the folk songs memorialize occasions on which a
*539 man has publicly spoiled for a fight, real or imaginary. This song com-
683 ments briefly on a man named Çalira, who looked for trouble:

579 Woy woy woy!
Woy woy woy!
Woy woy woy!
Çac bien arrangé corps yo!
Mène en bataille là!

Leyburn noted that the United States occupation affected the nature 114
and rigidity of the barriers separating the yeomanry from the 565
elite. For instance, he calls attention to the fact that the presidents 648
elected during the United States occupation were light-skinned members 643
of the elite. It seemed almost inevitable that, when the North ●
Americans sought men through whom to prosecute their plans for 175
"stabilizing" Haiti, they would settle on educated and worldly politicians,
men who were both sufficiently trained and sufficiently pliant
for the task. That these men were predominantly light-skinned was a
corollary aspect of Haitian social history. In this way Washington
played some part in reinforcing and expanding elite power; and
herein lies a paradox with which the author of *The Haitian People* has
dealt well. While the elite had been able to maintain their wealth and
power in Haiti for nearly a century, the presidential succession before
the United States occupation had largely been one of military chieftains,
principally dark-skinned men from the north of the Republic.
Michel Oreste, who had ruled for nine months in 1913–14, was the
first civilian to be chosen president in Haiti's entire history up to that
time; and Sudre Dartiguenave (1915–22), the North Americans'
choice, was the first president since 1879 who was both a southerner
and light-skinned. From the last quarter of the nineteenth century until
the occupation, in other words, Haiti's presidents were almost entirely
dark-skinned northern provincial leaders who literally seized
power by invading Port-au-Prince and deposing their predecessors.

Hence, in describing the separation between elite and yeomanry, 701
it is essential to notice the traditional special role of the military, with 565
its particular overtones of color. Here was one institutional feature of
Haitian society which was not directly dominated by the elite, and
through which nonelite folk were able to attain special power. But in
Haiti's case it is significant that the army itself was not firmly institutionalized;
regional warlords, rather than a centralized officer corps,
made the decisions. Leyburn cites Auguste Magloire, who enumerated 114
sixty-nine "important" revolutions between 1806 and 1879; had 175
this enumeration gone forward, it would have been much longer. Of 643
Haiti's twenty-four chief executives between 1807 and 1915, only 669
eight were in office for a period equal to their elected terms, and 565
seventeen were deposed by revolution. Before the United States occupation, 701
then, the continuing power of the elite could be seen as
somewhat separate from the succession of nonelite generals who
seized office over the years.

elite and the yeomanry. For instance, he calls attention to one unanticipated 114
(but inevitable) result of the occupation in this connection: 563
the large number of children whose fathers were United States Marines, 144
and whose mothers were members of the Haitian rural masses. 565
In this way the occupation contributed to the growth of the physically 871
intermediate population of Haiti, especially among rural folk, and thus perhaps to some bridging of the gap between yeomen and elite. Much more important, by its contributions to a broadening of the educational system, the occupation enabled talented black-skinned youths to improve themselves and to acquire new aspirations.

Recent economic and political developments in Haiti, through the 114
period 1941–57, have contributed grounds for modification of the 175
Leyburn interpretation. Though Leyburn predicted that "for the 565
present and near future it is safe to say that there will be no more 643
black non-élite presidents" (p. 101), subsequent developments soon proved him wrong. In January 1946, the government of elite member Elie Lescot fell under military pressure. A junta consisting of Franck Lavaud, Antoine Levelt, and Paul Magloire facilitated the installation of Dumarsais Estimé as president. Estimé was a dark-skinned man from the countryside (the village of Verettes, near St. Marc, in west-central Haiti), who had received a good education, served as a minister in the Vincent cabinet and, as a deputy, married a lighter-skinned woman whose family's elite membership was secure. Estimé might well be considered a self-made member of the elite, but he was not born into it, and his accession to power was the political expression of new possibilities in Haitian life.

The changes Estimé's regime symbolized were rooted in the intel- 175
lectual resistance to the United States occupation and in the search 186
for a Haitian identity in the face of that occupation. The strangely 645
easy domination that the United States wielded over Haitian society for several decades, and the relatively unexploitative but patronizing administration it provided, ended forever a fantasy that had gripped Haitian intellectuals for more than a century. The world of 1804, when a bloodied but defiant Haiti could bar by force of arms Napoleon's dreams of a New World empire (and assist indirectly thereby in the territorial expansion of a still weak United States) had vanished. The time when a Pétion could aid, protect, and politically influence a sick and tired Simón Bolívar was long gone. The world had changed, while Haiti, the Haitians learned under their North

175 American masters, had nearly stood still. For almost a century,
648 Haiti's elite had taken justifiable pride in their ancestors' triumph
186 over Napoleonic France, even while they remained enthralled by
French culture. This strange ambivalence would no longer do. In effect,
[829] the United States occupation compelled Haitian scholars to
rediscover what it meant to be Haitian.

114 As the writing of Jean Price-Mars (1928) expressed that identity
culturally, so the regime of Dumarsais Estimé began to express it
- 829 politically. For the first time, Africa, and not simply France, became
- 175 an important part of the nationalist dialogue. The Creole language
871 began to be studied in its own right, and a program to end illiteracy
212 through education in Creole was launched. Folkloristic studies, emphasizing
191 the African component in Haitian rural life, especially as
814 expressed in religion, came into vogue. Haitians began to explore
their own society as a synthesis that was as much African as it was
555 French—and as a synthesis, rather than as a mechanical alignment of
●643 two distinct traditions. The term *authentique* was employed to express
what was "truly Haitian," and Haiti herself was viewed as a unique
and original blending of two pasts. Under Estimé, rural folk of promise—and
they were, in the nature of things, predominantly dark-skinned—were
given greater opportunities, especially to be educated
and to enter government service. Moreover, these developments
took place at a time when Haiti's economic situation was relatively
good, and Estimé enjoyed a measure of popular support rare in
Haiti's entire history.

175 Furthermore, it was during the Estimé regime that Haitian cultural
- 829 life reached some sort of climax. In the 1920s young Haitian intellectuals
186 had been deeply shaken by the United States occupation
and had begun to formulate their own answers to the questions it
raised. Not only did Africa come into view as the wellspring of much
that was Haitian but Haiti's status as an occupied though once-sovereign
power dramatized the need for a social and political philosophy
that fitted with hemispheric and international realities. French
intellectual currents figured importantly in Haitian political thinking,
both because the intellectuals of the French Antilles of the time were
inspired by Haitian history and interested in Haiti, and because those
islands and Haiti shared a curious affinity in their "Gallo-African"
cultures. Anticolonial and Marxist points of view were espoused by a
few Haitians, but these perspectives were complicated by changing

175 565 These newcomers in the class structure enjoyed regular urban employment, were mostly literate and legally married, and harbored strong ambitions for the education of their children. Such persons were certainly not elite members, and their behavior (as, for instance, in their preference for speaking Creole rather than French) showed it; yet they were not part of the rural masses, nor merely an example of Marx's *Lumpenproletariat.* Yet significance of this new group for the Leyburn "caste" theory of the elite is considerable. Even today, if such persons lapse into poverty, their ideology will continue to [467] matter politically. Estimé's regime also loosed new political trends, since at first some encouragement was given to labor unions, and the [362] construction of urban low-cost housing was undertaken. We are unable to measure the long-term effects of these changes, but their reality raises some questions about the rigidity that Leyburn's analysis imputed to Haitian social structure.

175 In May 1950, after an unsuccessful bid to extend his term of office 669 illegally, Estimé's regime was toppled, again by a military junta. To 643 power came Paul Magloire, the first military figure to become chief 159 executive since the start of the United States occupation. Like Estimé before him, Magloire symbolized certain effects of the occupation upon Haiti's social and political structure and the way that structure was continuing to change. Magloire's origins were not within the elite, to judge by the traditional criteria. He was a black man, and from the north; born in Quartier Morin, he associated himself with the elite of the north coast port of Cap Haïtien, Haiti's second largest city. By marriage to a "Capoise," whose family status was much higher than his own, and by a successful career in the military during the occupation, Magloire penetrated elite circles. As commander of the Palace Guard, he had been a member of the junta that ousted Lescot in 1946, replacing him with Estimé. In 1950, when Magloire became president, after the army had forcibly discharged both houses of the legislature, he apparently had the support of the elite and of the business class, if not of the popular forces that had backed Estimé.

175 Magloire may be said to have moderated considerably the intensity 643 of Haitian politics, and his administration was not marked by so sharp an ideological concern with the relative roles of elite and [433] countryman. Times were good, and levels of life, both in the countryside and in the capital, were probably as high as they had been at any time in Haitian history. Certain economic gains were made in the tourist

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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industry, in the processing of essential oils, in extractive operations 175
(bauxite, copper), and in the manufacture of a few essential commod- 643
ities. The official attitude toward private investment, even by for- [433]
eigners, was unusually benign; and coffee, the big export crop, enjoyed a boom. Again, however, little effect could be seen in the basic economic structure. By 1956–57, when the Magloire regime was toppled, the era of apparent prosperity had come to an end.

Magloire's tenure ended as had his predecessor's; after a vain at- 175
tempt to prolong his regime by forcing through new laws, he was 643
brought down by the army and was succeeded by a series of juntas. 669
The politics of the brief interregnum preceding the accession of 665
François Duvalier was complicated by the rival claims of four presidential aspirants: Clément Jumelle, Daniel Fignolé, Louis Déjoie, and François Duvalier. These four men represented significantly different trends in Haitian thinking and were supported by different social groups. Jumelle, although regarded as the spiritual inheritor of the Magloire administration, won the support of many Haitian intellectuals; his appeal was partly grounded in his experience as finance minister in the Magloire cabinet, but the scandalous graft of the Magloire administration worked against him. Fignolé, too, had been a cabinet minister, but his antecedents and political philosophy differed sharply from Jumelle's. An eloquent, intense man of rural lower-class origins, Fignolé was regarded by many as a dangerous demagogue. His support came largely from the poorer urban classes, and his reputation as a union leader and as a "self-made" former minister of education gave him special strength among urban groups. Déjoie, considered to be the candidate of most of the business community and of the elite, was a highly successful agronomist and businessman who had done much to build rural industry; it is also generally believed that Déjoie was the "unofficial candidate" of the United States. Duvalier, trained as a doctor of medicine and for long an enthusiastic amateur ethnologist, had been a political enemy of the Magloire regime and, as a former minister in the Estimé cabinet, saw himself as the ideological descendant of Estimé. Duvalier appears eventually to have become the army's choice, ostensibly because he was considered "manageable"; at any rate, it was Duvalier who finally emerged as president, ending the uneasy interim which followed Magloire's ejection.*

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* Probably the most penetrating analysis of Haitian politics of the time is that provided by 114
Manigat, 1964, to which this interpretation owes much.

175 The course of events leading up to Duvalier's election are difficult
643 to assess. Fignolé, whom the army had permitted to serve as president
66 for sixteen days during the interregnum, had been denied official
recognition by the United States, suggesting that this country feared the implications of his political philosophy; his attempts at passing a whole new code of far-reaching social legislation apparently frightened the army, which removed him on grounds of "maintaining order." By the time an election decree was promulgated in August 1957, Fignolé was disqualified, and Jumelle had been forced to withdraw from candidacy. By election day, September 1957, only Déjoie and Duvalier were in contention, while Jumelle had gone into hiding. An attempted general strike, probably led by Déjoieiste elements, was stopped by the army, and Dr. François Duvalier was elected to power.

175 The Duvalier regime, beyond any doubt, has added something
642 new to the Haitian political scene. To begin with, it must be stressed
66 that Duvalier enjoys some popular support in the countryside as well
701 as in the urban centers. For many Haitians, Duvalier epitomizes the
643 return of the Estimé philosophy to Haiti, and it would be a serious
political error to suppose that the present regime is no more than an elite-hating dictatorship backed by machine guns. At the same time, the readiness of the Duvalieristes to use force probably exceeds that of any Haitian government in more than a century. Its excesses, moreover, appear to break certain traditions of political behavior—for instance, the unwillingness to take familial connections into account when political revenge is being carried out, the violence committed against women and adolescents regarded as political enemies, and so on. The most important break with tradition, however, has been the gradual undermining of the army as a political force—a force created in the first instance during the United States occupation.

175 In carrying out its plans, the Duvalier government has played more
642 creatively upon inconsistencies in United States policy than any pre-
648 ceding regime. It used United States military and economic power to
643 consolidate itself, while employing a posture of anti-North American
hostility in its search for other internal sources of political support. Most strikingly, it has capitalized on the deterioration of the United States design in the Caribbean region, both to exact concessions and to enhance an international image of itself as a stalwart "democratic"

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regime. That President Duvalier has been able to stay in power in 175
spite of internal dissaffection, sometime hostile United States propaganda, 642
a dire economic situation, personal ill health, and other woes, 648
is a tribute to his political acumen, if not to his principles. None of 643
this means, of course, that such consummate skill will continue to
work; Haitian governments have a way of falling suddenly, and the
Duvalier regime will probably not prove an exception.

Dr. Duvalier's success indicates that he has made certain correct 175
assessments, not only of Haiti's social and political structure but also 648
of United States policy with regard to Haiti. The occupation was 433
notable for its failure to make any telling alterations in the economic 114
structure or level of development of the country. Many beneficial 744
changes were made, as Leyburn demonstrates, particularly in the 20
areas of health and health services, communications, government administration, 871
education, and transport (though the use of corvée la- 489
bor on the roads led to serious abuses, and stimulated sanguinary
guerilla warfare). But most significantly, the United States institutionalized 175
the army and police forces. The ragged bands of political 648
mercenaries of the past were dissolved; the officer-ridden army was 701
transformed into a small, well-trained, and well-organized force. 643
Eventual firm control by this force of weaponry, communications, 669
and transport ended the era of presidential succession by invasion, 625
turned the army into the major locus of nonelectoral, president-making
power, and may have ended forever the possibility of an
agrarian revolt against the central authority. Another political effect
of the occupation was the importance it imparted to the United
States ambassador, whose political opinions thereafter would matter
significantly in the transmission of power at the top of the Haitian
governmental system. The Duvalier regime has continuously taken
full account of the consequences of United States interest; and its
leaders have been able to watch the operation of that interest in the
political events occurring between the fall of the Lescot government
and the present.

In the view of one acute observer, President Duvalier, in order to 175
consolidate his power, had to cope with three other loci of political 643
strength in addition to the army and the United States ambassador. 66
The business community, located for the most part in Port-au-Prince,
had strongly supported Déjoie's candidacy during the interregnum;
its leaders were mainly members of the elite, and many had strong

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175 business and personal ties with North Americans and other foreign
643 groups. Among the families of these leaders are Swiss, German, and
French nationals, and some Syrians and Lebanese who hold United
66 States citizenship. The business community had played a part in the
795 downfall of the Magloire regime, and business strikes were a typical
political instrument for putting pressure on presidential incumbents.
In addition, the clergy—particularly the Catholic clergy—exerted
political influence. Duvalier, while well aware of this, also attended
to the importance of vodoun* in Haiti, and to the influence wielded
by its cult leaders, particularly in the countryside and among the
urban poor. Finally, the President understood the strength of groups
such as the university students, the small but politically aware labor
unions, and certain professional associations, whose political strength
could be felt particularly in times of crisis. The Duvalier regime has
displayed intelligence as well as ruthlessness in dealing with these diverse
centers of political strength and potential opposition.

175 The official request for a United States Marine Corps mission to
648 "train" the Haitian Army was a brilliant political move by Duvalier,
apparently designed to serve several objectives simultaneously. It is
701 entirely correct that the renewed presence of the Marines in Haiti
702 created considerable rancor in some circles, but it also strengthened
66 Duvalier's hand in his dealings with all sources of internal opposition.
To some extent it apparently reassured the business community; and
it turned out to have reduced, rather than to have increased, the maneuverability
of the United States in developing a "corrective" or
"restraining" policy toward the Duvalier regime. Perhaps most important,
it helped Duvalier in his plan to build a praetorian guard to
counterbalance the power of the army itself.

625 The *tonton macoute*—a Creole epithet for the bogeyman—is an extremely
interesting variation on the security police theme. Its members
wear no official uniform (though blue denim pants and felt hats
[701] are affected). Members of the "TTM" carry out acts of terrorism
against groups and individuals and have seriously weakened the policing
[652] function and prestige of the regular army. Some calculations
put the operating costs of the TTM as high as one third of the governmental
budget. Though small groups of the TTM are distributed

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* Or, as it is more commonly called, "voodoo." Creole words employed in this introduction are transcribed in Laubach orthography (see Hall, 1953). It was not possible to extend this transcription to the original Leyburn text, where a "Gallic" orthography is followed.

throughout the country, the central administration remains in the 625
capital; urban units are dispatched to the countryside at times, if any show of internal political resistance is sensed. TTM members also sometimes engage in struggles with each other over political spoils; but too little is known to analyze internal strains within this paramilitary, secret-police organization. The TTM has proved particularly useful for carrying out the murders of outspoken individual political opponents and for crushing draconically any threat of strikes in the Port-au-Prince business community.

Little is known of the antecedents of TTM members. While it is 178
customary among the elite to describe these myrmidons as "trash," 625
some of them are literate, have some education, vaunt a political ideology—a kind of nationalist-*négritude* mystique, with strong Fascist elements—and differ dramatically from the ragged, illiterate followers of the warlords of pre-1915 Haiti. In fact, the TTM lieutenants are a direct, if somewhat deformed, product of the Estimé regime, a decade of structurally unsound prosperity, a culturally nationalistic ideology, and, more remotely, of the United States occupation itself.

With regard to the army, Duvalier has followed a policy of careful 643
attrition. While the United States Marine Corps "mission" was 701
(probably unknowingly) serving to immobilize opposition, Duvalier began to change the character of the army general staff. In the course of less than seven years he completely revamped the leadership of the army five times; this process not only kept the colonels off balance but allowed the President to reward loyal younger followers—principally those with dark skins, it is said—with rapid promotions.

The relationship between the *Duvalier* regime and the Catholic 642
clergy has been one of increasing alienation. At times members of the 795
clergy stood high in the regime, two having even served as members 661
of the cabinet; but not the slightest Church resistance has been tolerated. The low point in Duvalier–Church relations was the interruption of a mass by an armed TTM unit in downtown Port-au-Prince; leading members of the hierarchy later were summarily ejected from the country, and the Jesuit order was banned. Church power has waned significantly, both in the capital and in the countryside, as the regime has consolidated itself. Some observers believe that Duvalier is not so unwise as to aim at the complete elimination of the Church, but that he hopes instead to "nationalize" the clergy on some mutually agreeable basis.

643 At the same time, the President has expressed his favorable interest
in vodoun and is said to practice it; this statement, however, has
771 overtones of malevolence that are not appropriate. Vodoun is a religion,
795 though it lacks a centralized priestly hierarchy or administrative
organization. Outside the elite, Catholicism in Haiti has always
been colored by vodoun elements. The Haitian people as a whole
invest no effort in distinguishing what is "really Catholic" from what
is not, in their religious practices; in this regard Haitian countrymen
do not really differ from folk practitioners of Catholicism anywhere.
By its misreading of the piety of the Haitian masses, and its unceasing
hostility to vodoun—quite different from the church policy in the
so-called "Indian countries" of Latin America—the Church had
failed to secure its influence over the Haitian people. In contrast, Duvalier's
understanding of Haitian religious sociology has proved superior,
and is consistent with the *authentique* ideology of the 1940s,
though doubtless much more extreme in its implications.

642 Finally, the Duvalier regime has invaded such institutions as the
871 National University and the trade unions, and maintains close surveillance
over any individuals it regards as politically suspicious. Loyalty
467 oaths are required at the university; a public press no longer exists;
204 the unions, never strong, are now entirely powerless. But it
661 should be clear from this description of the Duvalier regime that repression
is not the key to Duvalier power so much as the means for
perpetuating that power under Haitian conditions. The key to Duvalier
642 power is to be found instead in the structure of Haitian society,
648 in the social history of the past two decades, and in the policy of the
United States, weakened by its inescapable preference for "stability"
over "radicalism." In his own way, President Duvalier is as radical as
he can be; but he is no Castro. It is now an open secret that Haiti's
support for sanctions against Cuba approved at Punta del Este was
matched by economic concessions from the United States; that the
Marines, knowingly or not, immobilized anti-Duvalier opposition in
a period when its supporters could be picked off, driven into exile, or
jailed; that the official Duvalier offer of Môle St. Nicholas to the
United States as a substitute for Guantánamo, though irrelevant, was
warmly reassuring to some North American political thinkers; and
that Duvalier, while he employs considerable "blackmail diplomacy"
in his dealings with the United States and is now out of favor, is still
considered "reliable" in that most important respect.

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175 deftly had him promoted out of colonial office. When another
669 group of commissioners came, he agreed in conference with them
that the remaining whites should be expelled for the sake of peace; as
soon as this was done, however, he effected the nomination of both
the chief commissioner and General Laveaux as representatives of
the colony in the French Assembly, sitting in Paris. Under guise of
175 bestowing honors, he had got rid of every white person who had the
642 slightest claim to rule. By 1797 Toussaint was the supreme leader in
643 Saint-Domingue, his authority disputed only by Rigaud and the
colored group. A civil war was needed to settle the issue between
them, and since his forces were much more numerous than Rigaud's,
Toussaint emerged victor in the brief conflict. Rigaud fled to France,
the power of the mulattoes was broken, and no one was left openly
to contest Toussaint's rule.

"The First of the Blacks," as Toussaint was called, is a bewildering anomaly, and full of contradictions. He had been a slave for fifty years before the insurrection, and was to live only eleven after it. In that short period he became one of the most talked-of men in the world. His Spanish superior officer had said that "God in this terrestrial globe could not commune with a purer spirit"; the Frenchman, Lacroix, remarked, "No one approaches him without fear, and no one leaves him without respect." Even his enemies paid him homage: an English officer, as "a man, a governor, and a general"; a white Frenchman, as "a philosopher, a general, and a good citizen." When he died Wordsworth wrote a moving sonnet to him who had strengthened human faith in "man's unconquerable mind." Yet Toussaint had been a deserter and a schemer, and ruthlessly exploited his power to achieve absolute authority. His own deep conviction of his special mission to lead his people from misery to security has always for his apologists excused the more dubious aspects of his character.

To many Toussaint was a hero with elements of saintliness. In the overheated atmosphere of prejudice and hatred in Saint-Domingue he pursued a calm policy of moderation. Under him, anarchy and massacres came to an end. With an army at his beck and call, he used force only to maintain freedom for his fellow blacks and to defend the colony against foreign invasion. As nominal governor-general after 1799 he revived prosperity, inculcated discipline as an antidote to the intoxication of liberty, respected his contracts, and was a friend of law and order. On the other hand, he had moments

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of inordinate vanity, and would brook no interference. His hench- 175
men had to endure merciless tongue-lashings. His own people's 642
freedom, about which he was publicly so solicitous, was in many 643
respects little better than slavery.

What he did is more easily told than what he was. Emerging, after a long reign of terror, as a leader in a land which had once been a paradise for whites, he checked among his people the passion and fear which had led to violence. With the restoration of peace, labor began once more on the plantations. The Negroes, though no longer slaves, were ordered back to work, and they docilely obeyed. The return of prosperity between 1799 and 1802 was amazing.

But the brilliance of Toussaint's rule was first dimmed and then 175
completely extinguished by the rising star of Napoleon in France.[17] 648
Haitian history between 1802 and 1804, although apparently inci- 669
dental to the story of the contest between blacks and colored people which here concerns us, is nevertheless significant for an understanding of what was to transpire in Haitian social affairs. Napoleon was irritated beyond measure at the effrontery of Toussaint's seizure of power in the colony. The black leader had shown canny statesmanship in winning the friendly coöperation of the president of the United States, John Adams. The supplies and ships that Adams sent enabled Toussaint not only to defeat Rigaud but to achieve independence from France in all but name. With American assistance, Toussaint negotiated an advantageous treaty with England. Probably even more annoying to the First Consul than these political triumphs was Toussaint's audacious success in aping and even anticipating the spacious actions by which Napoleon was trying to make himself majestic in the world's eyes.[18]

It is possible that Napoleon might not have paid so much attention

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[17] It seems strange that this black, a veritable genius whatever his faults, should be so mildly honored in modern Haiti. True, he is regarded with respect, and there are a few statues of him; but the homage of the people is paid rather to his successor, General Dessalines, the antithesis of Toussaint in everything but courage. It was Dessalines, of course, who struck the final blow for Haitian freedom, but even this triumph seems to the foreigner small in comparison with the very real achievements of Toussaint. [643]

[18] For example: Napoleon had given a new constitution to France after his *coup d'état* of the 18 Brumaire; similarly Toussaint, having effected his own coup in Saint-Domingue by deposing the French civil agent, citizen Roume, immediately thereafter gave *his* people a new constitution. In it he not only assumed all political power for life, but also ascribed to himself the right of naming his successor. Bonaparte was unable to take so daring a step for another year. There is ample evidence to show that meanwhile he chafed under the idea of being imitated and anticipated by a "gilded African," as he called Toussaint.

III

THE FORMATIVE YEARS, 1804–1843

1. *Dessalines (1804–1806)*

175 613 159 IF ever a country had an opportunity to start absolutely fresh in choosing its own social institutions, Haiti had that opportunity in 1804. Free at last, with no traditions to uphold, the first independent Negro state in the world, owing allegiance to no man or nation, the Haitians might (theoretically, at least) have invented an entirely new little world of economic, political, religious, and social life. All paths were open to them. Dessalines,[1] as head of state, had only to lead them. His mental limitations, however, were such that he could only follow where the hated French had led, and soon set the Haitians upon the road to a caste system.

175 642 643 The first part of the story of independent Haiti is to a certain extent the story of the alternative lines of action laid down by four great men, the black Dessalines and his equally black successor Christophe, the mulatto Pétion and his worshipful mulatto disciple Boyer.

On New Year's Day, 1804, Dessalines made a stirring proclamation of independence. In it were many references to *liberté* but none whatever to *égalité* or *fraternité*. The two years of his rule show clearly that he had no use for such abstractions as equality or fraternity, while liberty to him was synonymous only with freedom from French dominance. He was a tyrant whose very tyranny unwittingly prepared the way for eventual control by the colored group over the blacks.

Accompanying the proclamation of Dessalines was another signed by his generals, naming him governor-general for life, swearing "to obey blindly all laws emanating from his authority," giving him the right to make peace or war, and permitting him to name his successor. Absolutism was the order of the day. In the same paragraph in which he condemned French despotism, Dessalines said to his

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[1] Jean-Jacques Dessalines had been born a slave on a plantation near Grande-Rivière du Nord in the seventeen-fifties or -sixties. Unlike Toussaint, whose leading general he was, Dessalines was illiterate. The outstanding characteristic of his temperament was his violent passion.

people: "If ever you refuse, or grumblingly accept, the laws which 175
the genius guarding your destinies dictates to me for your happiness, 642
you will merit the fate of ungrateful people. But perish that hideous
idea!" There can be little doubt that he wished Haiti under his 643
direction to become prosperous; but it is likewise clear that he was personally self-centred and inordinately grasping.

Each step Dessalines took to further his ambitions either for Haitian prosperity or for his own fortunes had its bearing upon the development of social classes in the country. Extermination of all remaining whites was one of the first tasks he set himself. On a promise of clemency he lured several hundred gullible French out of hiding, and butchered them in cold blood. His campaign of extirpation was methodical and thorough. To try to penetrate into the psychological background of this violence is to desert fact for speculation: it may have been a desire for revenge on the French, pure and simple; it may have been gloating sadism; he may have wished to warn France against any future attempts to regain possession of the country; or he may have wanted to notify his subjects of his intention to rule with severe discipline. Certainly this last aim was achieved, if any of his people did not already know, after two years of warfare, the extent of his ruthlessness. He ruled by fear and by threats, never by the cultivation of loyalties.

Apparently he was afraid that Napoleon would renew his efforts 175
to subdue the former colony. To forestall such an attempt he ordered 643
each of his governing subalterns to construct one great fort on the 466
most prominent hill in their district—a scheme which led immediately 712
to the institution of forced labor. He likewise devised a plan, 361
not actually put into effect, for destroying all towns and plantations near the coast and moving the capital to an inland village; and so isolating Haitians from all contact with the outside world.

Turning to domestic policy, he faced a herculean task. The warfare 175
of 1802–3 had left the country in chaos. Plantations and agricultural 643
projects were almost totally ruined. All habits of steady industry had 433
been lost. Dread of a possible new attack by the French made necessary 701
a great army, and this in turn removed most able-bodied men 464
from productive labor in the fields, while the construction of fortresses 712
still further depleted the labor supply. The first census of free
Haiti, in 1805 (probably not highly accurate), showed only 380,000 175
people, with the women outnumbering men by almost three to 162
two.

tion? Here again, the decision of a leader fixed the direction of 175
Haitian life for decades to come. It is agreed by commentators that 701
overmilitarization was the bane of nineteenth-century Haiti. One [162]
tenth of all able-bodied men were constantly in active army service.
Moreover, all the male cultivators on plantations must hold them-
selves in readiness to obey the government's call to arms; ammuni-
tion and arms were stored in every parish. A military mentality was [181]
nourished, the people early learning the lesson (apparently unchal-
lenged by any liberal) that the army should rule and the people obey.

Although the common soldiers were ex-slaves who, upon dismissal from service, would return to the ranks of agricultural workers, their officers had a higher status. Noncommissioned officers had a long road to travel to eminence, but like the overseers they had at least a glimpse of the promised land of distinction. Captains and generals had this vision within their grasp: they were already of the élite.

In the subcategory of "artisans" were included all the townspeople 175
who carried on crafts or trades. It must be remembered that Haiti 463
had no cities, and that its two largest towns then numbered probably
no more than 10,000 people each, so that artisans were not numerous. 361
Since there was a distinction in the arduousness of various pursuits as
well as in their financial return there existed in this category, as in the
official and military, some chance for social prestige.

The only persons remaining outside the categories mentioned were 175
colored landowners who had held estates in the colonial period. 471
Dessalines took active steps to gain control of most of the land in the 423
country, but at his death in 1806 there were still many of the old
proprietors left who were, in the main, determined to hold their 425
land and preserve their dignity as non-laborers.

Assassination by his political foes ended the career of Dessalines 175
only two years after he assumed power. In 1805 he had had himself
crowned emperor in imitation of Napoleon, but unlike Napoleon he 643
permitted no nobility. "*Moi seul, je suis noble!*" he replied to ambi-
tious henchmen who asked for the establishment of a peerage. It was
the Emperor's tactless handling of the social situation which caused
his murder, for he touched sensitive nerves on the raw in attacking
property rights, inherited privilege, color distinctions, and social
aspirations. The cultivators grumblingly accepted his decrees; the
ambitious upper group did not.

The former *affranchis* fully intended to keep their lands once the

prestige, and the normal fulfillment of dignity, were thus frustrated 175
in their efforts. They began to see that the Emperor intended to 425
withhold from them freedom, room for the exercise of ability or 556
power, fullness of life in whatever form. Not only was there little opportunity for achieving prestige; the repressive and contemptuous attitude of Dessalines denied them even ordinary negative respect, without which dignity of life is impossible.

By confiscation of vacant and falsely claimed estates, Dessalines 175
created a vast public domain. He did not hesitate to secure other 423
lands which he considered valuable, resorting to arbitrary and often 425
cruel means—even, it is said, to forgery and murder—to dispossess those who stood firm in their claims. This attack on private property added other dissidents to his enemies—men who felt themselves clearly in the right legally and morally, men who with clear consciences joined the movement to put down a tyrant. The land thus [427]
acquired was leased in parcels at an annual rent to the highest bidders.[6]

The Emperor was blind to the normal human needs of the better 175
elements of the population. He deprived them of property in land, 643
the only basis they knew for wealth and independence; he forbade 421
enterprises undertaken by individual initiative; he continually 472
wounded delicate sensibilities. The Emperor was not a man to spare 661
people's feelings, and he dared use the frank but dangerous words 563
Negro and mulatto. He once shouted to a group of pleaders for position: "*Prenez garde à vous, nègres et mulâtres! Nous avons tous combattu contre les blancs; les biens que nous avons conquis en versant notre sang, appartiennent à nous tous; j'entends qu'ils soient partagés avec équité!*"[7] It was not only Dessalines' idea of "equity" which aroused the *anciens libres* but his use of the descriptive nouns they hated.

The colored people were well aware of the hostility of Dessalines 175
to their group. He was inferior to them in learning, and knew it. He 643
was certainly, by the world's judgment, inferior to them in birth. 563
His very deficiencies by comparison with his colored subjects made 661
him hate them more: for example, he was passionately fond of dancing, preferring compliments on his grace to praise of his statesmanship; yet his awkwardness on the ballroom floor even

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[6] Although there are no records extant to show the exact amount of land which [175]
Dessalines succeeded in bringing into state ownership, it is estimated that more than [425]
two thirds of all the productive plantations in Haiti in 1806 were in the hands of the [423]
government. Other estimates range as high as ninety per cent.

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175 beside other ex-slaves was too evident to avert ridicule, which
● 643 Dessalines quickly noted. Few opportunities escaped the Emperor,
563 therefore, of making the light-skinned Haitians quake in their boots.
661 He wrote to Pétion (August 24, 1804), leader of the colored people, that in his slaughter of white Frenchmen he had often been "unable" to distinguish between whites and light-colored Haitians. Pétion and his friends knew that Dessalines did not regret his inability to make the distinction.[7]

175 Possibly Dessalines was clear-sighted enough to realize that the old distinctions of color, if allowed to continue in the new state as in-
563 dicative of social prestige, might cause endless strife within the
643 nation. Possibly, on the other hand, he wished to make the lighter-skinned Haitians realize that he, a Negro, was more than their equal. Whatever his underlying motives, he was impatient with the struggle for prestige. The steps he took to eradicate distinctions based upon color were characterized by his usual blunt tactlessness. In 1805 he informed Pétion, the outstanding mulatto general, that a union of black and colored people was essential to the happiness of the Empire; he said he wanted the Haitian people to become *bronzed* by this union, so that there would be no longer any important difference of skin color. All this was preface to a proposal that Pétion, as the ablest of the mulattoes, should marry the Emperor's black daughter, Célimène. Pétion, refined, highly educated, and gently cynical, was considerably perturbed and frankly embarrassed by the suddenness of this radical suggestion. His reply, that he was not inclined to marry at all, offended Dessalines and made him suspect a slight, but he dismissed Pétion with the pointed suggestion that he "think the matter over." Pétion knew, as the Emperor did not, that one of his aides-de-camp, Chancy, was not only in love with Célimène but had already got her with child. It is entirely possible, too, that he was aware of the growing underground opposition to Dessalines and that, as the Emperor's star was beginning to decline, he did not wish

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[721] [7] It must be said to the credit of the black masses that they did not relish the systematic slaughter of the whites which so pleased Dessalines. Negro cultivators frequently collected potential victims, hiding them and aiding their escape from the country. The repugnance of the masses for such massacre was so evident that their generals had at times to drive them at bayonet's point. "The blacks of the plain behaved very well," said an exile in a letter (June 1, 1804) written from Jamaica to Moreau de Saint-Méry. Madiou says that after the massacre of the whites some Haitian blacks abandoned their country and went to join former masters in a foreign land.

to ally himself with the ruling family. When Dessalines shortly 175
discovered his daughter's condition, he burst into maledictions 563
against all mulattoes, saying that they had plotted this disgrace to 643
him and to his family. He went so far as to speak of having them
all executed.

The Emperor's determination, and all his measures, could not quench the social ambition of his leading subjects. They bore what must be borne, conspiring meanwhile to get rid of him. They still had the advantage over the masses of a superior education, and they knew the path to eminence, once the obstacle of the Emperor was removed.

Nothing was done during the reign of Dessalines to cultivate the 175
minds of the laboring class. Discipline backed by force was the
guiding principle in dealing with them. Instead of trying to educate 643
his people to understand their duties and to take an active part in 661
statecraft, Dessalines—his generals and counselors, mulatto and black 641
alike, thoroughly approving—used only compulsion. There was [871]
actually little difference between the attitude of this ruling clique toward the mass of laborers and that of their former white owners. Both looked upon them as cattle. A few of his advisers tried to persuade the Emperor to provide moral and religious education for the people so that they would not be seduced into completely evil ways, but the Emperor replied, "You are wrong: the laborers can be controlled only by fear of punishment and even death; I shall lead them only by these means; my 'morale' shall be the bayonet."

In short, between 1804 and 1806 no prominent figure in Haitian 175
life seems even to have dreamed of "liberal" institutions. Those who 565
had education, knowledge, and culture preserved them carefully for 641
themselves. The wisdom, even the possibility, of enlightening the masses was doubted. Most Haitians remained in complete ignorance of what went on in the outside world.

Dessalines was killed by ambush near Port-au-Prince on October 17, 1806. 175
The mulattoes were generally supposed to have planned 643
the assassination, for it was well known that they had no cause to be 661
fond of him. His callousness had raised up enemies in all walks of life. The cultivators were glad he was gone, because of his harshness. They were virtually slaves again in all but name; it was reported that upon his personal estates he had made unsatisfactory workers run the gauntlet between lines of soldiers armed with thorny switches, and

175 such an example of rigor might spread. The moral element of the
643 population had long looked askance at his libertinage; his first act
661 upon entering a town during a visit of state was regularly to have his
aides select for him the most attractive females in the vicinity, with
whom he would spend more time than at the business of governing.
[703] Not even his army was sorrowful over his death. He had let his
loyal troops go for months without pay, and then, reviewing a group
of them one day, taunted and railed at them for their ragged uniforms. "You look as naked as a bunch of old bottles!" he cried.

Dessalines had restored order to his country and had founded a state. Both achievements rested upon a display of force which inspired cringing fear and denied normal human aspirations. His entire social and economic order was based upon the subservience of the many to the few.

2. *Christophe (1807–1820)*

175 Until 1807 all Haitians had the same political background—the
French colonial régime, revolution, the governorship of Toussaint,
178 and the stern rule of Dessalines. Now the common path forked. Two
avenues were opened up during the next dozen years, one by Christophe, the other by his Southern and mulatto rival, Pétion. The former was the road of discipline, hard work, and feudal control; the latter was one of persuasion, *laissez faire*, and small properties. Haiti ultimately chose the second.

175 The logical successor to Dessalines was his powerful Negro hench-
643 man, Christophe.[8] This black general felt so certain of his leadership
that he did not even bother to attend the *Assemblée Constituante*
642 which was to choose the new head of state. The mulattoes, however,
had agreed among themselves that they had had enough of rule by
662 ignorant ex-slaves. They consequently performed the very skillful
manœuvre of preparing a constitution which should effectively shear a new president of dictatorial power; this done, they dutifully elected Christophe to the presidential office. The wrathful general peremptorily declined to rule by virtue of so anaemic a document, and led his army southward to demand proper respect for his august

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[8] The name Christophe was taken from the English Caribbean island of St. Christopher, on which this black slave was born. Later in life he took as his first name Henry, spelling it in the English fashion rather than the French, as an indication of his wholehearted admiration of English people and English ways.

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person. To his evident surprise he was met not by meek submission, 175
but by the army of the mulatto Pétion. Christophe was not defeated; 643
neither was he victorious. He was obliged to retire in high dudgeon 642
to his loyal supporters in the North, where he proceeded to set up a 662
state according to his own idea of what a state should be.

The Assembly thereupon outlawed Christophe on the ground of rebellion against constituted authority, electing in his stead their great favorite Pétion, whose power as president of the Republic was to be limited by the new constitution. For the next thirteen years, from 1807 to 1820, the tiny country with its 10,000 square miles was divided, Christophe ruling in the North and in the fertile valley of the Artibonite, and Pétion governing until his death in 1818 in the West and South, the main strongholds of the colored element.

Christophe was of the stuff that myths are made of. He was in- 175
disputably Haiti's most dynamic, relentlessly effective, and dramatic 643
ruler of the nineteenth century. Like Toussaint and Dessalines, he 663
was a black ex-slave, and like them he had won his spurs as a military leader during the revolution. He was an ardent patriot whose love for his country did not lead to retrogressive chauvinism. Whereas Dessalines through fear and hatred of the French had excluded all white men from Haiti, Christophe had the perspicacity to see that the country could benefit from the contribution of whites. Englishmen he especially welcomed. Like his predecessors Christophe drove his people—with a tyrant's lash, many thought—but only to increase the glory of Haiti.

Christophe had a vaulting imagination which brought glamour [712]
even to practical expedients. He built a colossal fortress on a high
mountain in the North, partly for defense, but partly to make his
contemned Negro people feel that they could achieve one of the
architectural and engineering marvels of the age. His exquisite [644]
palace, Sans Souci, not only satisfied his own vanity as a ruler but also provided a focal point for the imagination and loyalty of his subjects. In 1811 he had himself crowned king, Henry I, amidst pomp and circumstance—and then created a royal court, partly to reward his leaders, partly to get the fees for patents of nobility, but primarily to bind all important men in the country to himself and to the Haitian state with unbreakable personal bonds. Dramatic in almost every particular of his life and reign, he ruled for thirteen years more through force of personality than by tyranny. Taxes were heavy and

Taxes were heavy

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651 and work strenuous; but there were a sound currency, commercial
652 and agricultural prosperity, and a full treasury.

Like many a great man he was an overweening egotist. His
175 energy and ambition, for Haiti as well as for himself, neither under-
● 643 stood nor tolerated a lesser determination than his own. At times he
seemed more intent upon the letter than upon the spirit of his laws.
159 Probably his chief defect, a common failing of strong men, was a
disregard for humble individual worth. To write of him invites the
most colorful vocabulary. He is Black Majesty and the Emperor
Jones. By almost any standards of leadership he would be accounted a
great man. He lacked only those few final, subtle qualities which
make for sheer genius. In 1820, stricken by paralysis and faced with
defections in his army, he died as he had lived, dramatically, ending
his life with a specially saved bullet (folklore says a silver one), in his
palace of the ironic name, Sans Souci.

175 In no significant respect did Christophe change the feudal structure
643 of economic organization begun by Toussaint and carried on by
Dessalines. It was in administration, especially as it affected social
status, that the thirteen years of Christophe were important for the
[641] future of Haiti. Where the Emperor had been an unpredictable
tyrant whose heavy hand inspired only terror, Christophe was a
sternly just father whose well-disciplined children respected, ad-
mired, and even loved him.

175 The land policy of the two régimes was similar. Government
175 estates were farmed out on five-year leases to the highest bidders
427 among the well-to-do; large plantations belonging to the state were
415 tilled by cultivators who might, without taking the term too harshly,
655 be called serfs; loyal supporters and wealthy individuals were en-
566 trusted with responsibility. Like Dessalines, Christophe added wealth
643 to power and rendered all his subjects dependent upon himself
rather than on their own resources and influence—but all this with
a difference.

175 Where the Emperor had denied the natural vanity of his aides by
643 refusing them nobility, Christophe accepted their ambition as per-
fectly normal and made use of it for his own purposes. Four years
642 after he had established his state, he changed it from a republic to a
565 kingdom; all his important men he made dukes, barons, counts,
knights. He warned them that he would expect them to live up to
the dignities conferred upon them. Pomp and regalia are costly;

175 643 642 565 therefore plantations must be made to yield the uttermost farthing if the nobleman was to pay for the necessities of strict court etiquette. It was by no means a childish whim which prompted Christophe to call himself a king; rather an intelligent utilization of the human material the leader had to work with. Vanity was to serve an economic and a political purpose.

175 651 Christophe perceived that the defect of Dessalines' reign had been lack of security, both of person and property. Agriculture is a long-term investment and so must be hedged about by orderly rules. To this end the monarch stated his laws clearly, charged a fixed tax—one fourth of the annual crop—which would enrich the kingdom while allowing the tenant-proprietor a reasonable profit, and then guaranteed that no arbitrary demands would be made. Certainly there was no pampering of the wealthy, but there was ample prosperity resulting from regularity and security.

175 566 641 466 The ordinary citizen was, as he had been, bound to the soil as an agricultural laborer. This quasi-serfdom, however, was comparative freedom. It simply meant that the home and work of a man must be at the plantation on which he had been born. Saturday afternoons and Sundays were free, so that the laborers might make the most of their opportunities to visit the nearest market village, to buy and sell small goods, gossip, and enjoy the sociability of being part of a crowd. Being bound to the soil meant simply that they could not move, when the impulse seized them, to another plantation or another part of the country. Those whose mothers or relatives were natives of a plantation must return to that estate, being forbidden to live in towns. No person, military or other, who did not derive his living from a plantation, could marry an agricultural worker—a prohibition designed to prevent workers from leaving estates because of family ties, and particularly to prevent women, as mothers of future cultivators, from deserting agriculture. [582]

175 566 512 466 Mediaeval serfdom itself went no farther in binding people to the soil. Indeed, it did not go so far in regulating the daily life of serfs. Under Christophe the cultivators lived according to a routine as strict as that of a school. Reveille was rung as early as three o'clock to arouse women to prepare breakfasts for their menfolk; by four or four-thirty the bell was sounded for the commencement of work, which began after prayers had been led by the overseer. At nine o'clock there was a pause for luncheon, and then a resumption of

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175 565 566 their new status was definitely higher. Mild serfdom might be thought of as the first intermediate step toward freedom. Democracy was still far off, there being no real middle class upon which to build it. Only the artisans of the towns and the ex-soldiers or the cultivators who had managed to lease small estates could be considered middle class. Christophe forced every dweller in villages or towns to have a manual skill. The only alternative was field work on a plantation.

The "aristocrats" of the kingdom were prevailingly black rather than colored. It was not to be expected that a vain man would soon forget the trick by which the mulattoes had frustrated him in his expectation of becoming the ruler of all Haiti. 175 669 ● 643 563 To say that the intermittent civil war between Christophe's kingdom of the North and Pétion's republic of the South was a struggle between blacks and colored people would not do great violence to the essential truth. Christophe's suspicion of gens de couleur was so well known that few were surprised at the high death rate of mulatto generals in the North. The murder of General Clervaux was definitely laid at Christophe's door.

The fact remains that among the nobility were men of all degrees of color. The King liked to say that he neither accepted nor yet took exception to the color of a man's epidermis—that in this matter he was *vert* (green), which is to say, neutral and indifferent. When he was angry his wrath fell indiscriminately upon the offender of whatever complexion. Similarly, when he found a light-skinned man who faithfully supervised a leased estate, thus proving his loyalty, the man was rewarded and promoted. 175 643 721 563 Nevertheless, an underlying prejudice remained in his breast, bursting out occasionally at crises, and having ultimately a serious effect upon the loyalty of many of his people. When some of his subjects, enticed by the easygoing régime of the South, ran away to Pétion's republic, Christophe was angry enough to renew the war against Pétion (1811). The South won the encounter, thereby adding fuel to Christophe's rage. [727] Three hundred prisoners he had captured he ordered tortured, and the angry King abused and insulted his own officers and executed several soldiers for having lost the battle. These actions caused more defections, renewed punishments, and a more abiding rancor. As one writer put it, the King "now regarded the mulattoes with a hatred so deep and fiendlike, that nothing would satisfy the direness of his

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vengeance but the utter extermination of that race."[12] He even 643
ordered the execution of a mulatto woman in Gonaïves because she 721
had prayed for the success of Pétion. 563

During the latter years of his reign his personal popularity waned
somewhat, owing to his relentless insistence upon efficiency and to 175
his increasing tendency to lose his temper. Defections to the South 643
occurred almost daily. The cultivators, comparing their never- 167
ceasing toil on Northern plantations with the reported liberty and 563
leisure of life in the South, continually drifted away. So alluring was the paradise of ease (and poverty) of the neighboring realm that Christophe found it necessary to keep a cordon of soldiers along the borders of his kingdom to prevent desertions. His administration now embarked on actual persecution of colored people. Inflammatory pamphlets were spread abroad, designed to make the Negroes think that the mulattoes were planning to enslave them once again. Under this campaign of propaganda many light-skinned Northerners had to go into hiding.

Despite all discrimination, the important line was drawn between 175
cultivators who formed nine tenths of the population, and aristocrats 565
who, with the army, made up the remainder. The nobility, the
directors of landed estates, and the generals directed the activities of
other people, so that the colonial prejudice against manual labor was
strengthened. Here lay the basis of a persistent Haitian attitude of [461]
mind: to work with one's hands is to show oneself a member of the
masses; to direct others is the distinction of the upper class. Educa- [871]
tion, neglected under Dessalines altogether, was fostered by Christophe. He established a few schools, inviting as schoolmasters certain Englishmen familiar with the then popular methods of the Lancasterian system; but since the cultivators were busy on the plantations, only the children of aristocrats benefited by the limited educational system and the social distance between classes was increased.

A French commentator says that Christophe showed unusual in- 114
sight in devising for his kingdom "the only organization of which 175
an African society was capable," namely, a combination of military 642
despotism with certain benevolent inclinations, and territorial feudalism based upon a nobility created by the King. Actually, it suited not so much the African background of the people, which lay

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[12] Dr. Jonathan Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo* (Philadelphia, 1837), II, 193.

Northern Haiti flourished magnificently under Christophe's 175
sternly benevolent rule. The King had that daring spirit of initiative 643
which was so generally lacking in later Haitian history; he had, in 642
addition, the power necessary to force through a new adjustment if 433
the old way showed defects.[17] He excited artificial wants among his
leaders by making nobles of them, and then compelled them to satisfy
these wants without ever slipping back to a lower standard of living.
Thirteen years of enforced labor and of order kept by a rigorously effective police force gave northern Haiti the kind of prosperity [438]
she had known in colonial days. Christophe encouraged commerce [439]
and protected foreign traders. He called in all debased coinage, substituting for it sound gold and silver currency. The revenue he raised [652]
was larger than it had been since 1791, amounting to about $3,500,000 annually. Probably the most eloquent testimony to his success is the fact that at his death, when the kingdom of the North was once more united with the republic of the South, more than six million dollars found their way into the republican treasury.

The Black King's economic system worked. It was based on a 175
social division of the people, with the masses doing manual labor, 565
and the aristocrats definitely set apart and recognized as upper class. By 1820 Haiti was well on its way toward the caste system.

3. *Pétion (1807–1818)* 171

Almost all Latin-American countries in the nineteenth century 175
exhibited one common feature: an aristocratic landowning class 631
lording it over peons. Haiti did not follow this pattern. She had aristocrats and peasants, but the aristocrats did not own most of the land, and the peasants were not peons. If later rulers had kept the organization of economic life begun by Toussaint and developed by his fellow blacks, Dessalines and Christophe, it is almost certain that Haitian social evolution would have resembled that of the rest of Latin America, for it would not have been a great change from

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[17] Damoclès Vieux, "Le Roi d'Haïti Henri Christophe," in *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti*, II, No. 3 (June 1931), p. 14, says that Haiti's periodic civil troubles and social misfortunes, both ending in a diminution of the state's economy, have been due to economic maladjustments. "Our weaknesses in political life derive from our immobility in material production." Immobility is an index of stagnation. Few rulers of Haiti have been at once powerful enough to overcome the immobility and wise enough to know what measures had to be taken. [114]

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171 175 631 feudal holdings to absolute ownership of land by the influential. It is strangely paradoxical that an aristocrat, the light-skinned Pétion, representing the cultured group in society, broke the economic power of his own aristocratic class and made the former slaves not serfs but peasants. It is doubtful whether he intended either result.

175 643 159 Alexandre Pétion was the antithesis of Haiti's three eminent blacks in all but military skill. Toussaint's genius as a fighter lay in his surprise moves, Dessalines' in his recklessness, Christophe's in his bulldog determination; but Pétion was a great general because he knew when to retire and so lead his enemy into an exposed position. The three Negroes had been born in slavery; Pétion, coming of a cultured and sophisticated affranchi family, grew up in France. Dessalines was a crude ruffian by comparison, while in the face of Pétion's suavity Christophe's impetuousness seemed rankly uncouth. Where they bludgeoned, Pétion persuaded; where they hacked their way through opposition in the determination to gain an end, he graciously yielded and so won new friends. Tactful at every point, he survived even such contretemps as his refusal of the hand of the Emperor's daughter.

As leader of a young nation, Pétion might almost be said to have had too broad an understanding of human nature. He was a gentle ruler over his people; when they erred he did not punish or upbraid, but excused their misdeeds by assuming the cause to be some fatal compulsion over which they momentarily had no control. He had no wish to drive the nation to "success." Neither did he care to use his position for personal aggrandizement. His mind was supple and practical, disdainful of abstractions, undeluded by resounding slogans, fertile in compromise, not finical as to means, always unsurprised, exquisitely tactful. When crises arose to dismay his ministers, Pétion's philosophic calm was undisturbed.

Cynically tolerant, he gave office to political enemies if they chanced to be able. A representative of the topmost class of society, [41] [71] [423] he managed to moderate antagonisms based on color. He gave sanctuary and financial succor to the Spanish-American liberator, Simón Bolívar; he established the foundations of an educational system; he defended the state against Christophe's power; he ruled constitutionally; and he gave land to his people, even to the humblest of them. When he died, his subjects for miles around came into Port-au-Prince, where they stood weeping about his palace, refusing

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to be comforted. They had lost their best friend and their "*petit père*." 175

Dessalines would be emperor and Christophe king, but Pétion was content to remain a simple president. He was an anomaly—as if a Parisian of delicate sensibilities and mellow tolerance had somehow come to power with a darker skin in an alien land. 643 159

He has been highly praised and is worthy of eulogy. The fact remains that his country was rich when he came to power and poor when he died; united in 1806 and divided in 1818. Candor compels his admirers to admit that many of the calamities of the social and economic history of Haiti can be traced back to Pétion's administration.

The crucial act of Pétion was to parcel the land. From that policy flowed the enduring consequences which became the predominant socio-economic characteristics of Haiti. 175 423 421

Until Pétion's time the island had never known small properties. Large estates had been the mark of social distinction in the French colony; Toussaint had kept the plantations large,[18] while Dessalines and Christophe had absorbed more and more land for the state, leasing it out in great blocks. The constitution of 1806[19] gave no indication of impending change, for it specifically declared all land to be the property of the Haitian nation. Within three years, however, the process of dividing and giving away the state's lands was well under way. 178

It would be illuminating to know what mental process in Pétion moved him to make so radical an about-face in land policy. The reasons he gave were, first, that the people had ably defended their country and so deserved a reward; second, that he wanted all the people to have a vital interest in the actual soil itself.[20] These may have been his only reasons. Others suggest themselves: the republic owed wages to its large standing army, which were more easily paid in land, of which the state had much, than in cash, of which it had little and progressively less; it would be much easier to keep peace in a country where men were free than where they were serfs; and the example of free ownership in the South would seem alluring enough

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[18] He permitted the leasing of plantations as small as fifty acres if the soil were especially rich. [427]

[19] December 27. This document was largely the handiwork of Pétion.

[20] The former explanation he consistently gave in his various messages to the Senate proposing progressive parcelings of the land; the latter he wrote to a friend, saying that he wished to "[illegible] dans l'amour du sol."

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423 to Christophe's serfs in the North to cause defections ultimately sufficient to win the civil war for the republic.[21]

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663 Those who would read into Pétion's democratization of land tenure the liberal convictions of a far-sighted statesman must ignore the evidence of his earliest land acts. For two or three years nothing was so apparent as that Pétion wished to please his friends, the mulatto aristocrats. He not only had the Senate restore to their former owners all lands of which Dessalines had despoiled them, but he also agreed to a law authorizing a cash payment up to the full value of crops planted and then lost during the last year of the Emperor's rule.[22] By these concessions the President immediately wiped out the rancor left behind him by Dessalines, reversed that ruler's whole land policy, gained the support of thousands of aspirants for social position, and bound in personal loyalty to his régime all the colored leaders.

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[428] He went further. Insecurity of tenure under Dessalines had worried landlords who were not actually mulcted of their estates, and so the President undertook to guarantee security. Thereafter all sales of land were to be registered by government deed, and so confirmed to the purchaser in perpetuity; government courts would be empowered to settle disputes over payment of rents; proof of the death of the testator must be forthcoming before wills could be probated. Not even the single limitation on ownership—that if the proprietor of an estate should remain away from Haiti the state might lease his property and receive the income from it—disturbed them, for they were patriots enough, and poor enough, to feel that Haitians should live at home.

As if this were not enough to please the landed gentry, the tax

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114 [21] Saint-Rémy, *Pétion et Haïti* (Paris, 1854-57), V, 185-186, suggests another reason, namely, that people will always be more ready to defend land they actually own than for an impersonal state. This sounds logical, but certainly the Negroes had fought ardently enough to drive out the French in 1803, landless though they were. Saint-Rémy continues: "And moreover, was it not time to dismember the enormous plantations which still bore the names of those colonists whose mother country might still at any moment demand to reclaim their heritage? And could this dismemberment be achieved otherwise than by giving the people an honorable title to it?"

423 [22] Two successive laws, February 9 and March 26, 1807, achieved these ends. The former specified that all persons who, by purchase or gift or legacy, had acquired land before November 1, 1803 (when Rochambeau surrendered) or since February 7, 1804 (when Dessalines had ordered a confiscation of all titles) should be newly assured of their rights to such holdings. There was a single, possibly unimportant, limitation: the acquisition must have been by Haitians *from* Haitians.

175 433 652 534 In his easygoing republic Pétion saw prosperity slowly wane, cultivation decline, profits give way to deficits. He issued a large amount of paper currency, and continually hoped for better times which did not come. The days of large fortunes were over. The economic system affected the aristocrats: although they were still landowners, so also were thousands of common folk. The criterion of rank became increasingly not wealth, but rather pursuit of a career which demanded no manual labor. Distinctions, if they are to be effective, must be made on the basis of conditions not easily achieved by all and sundry. Education and good French met this requirement; even more did a light skin color.

175 ● 643 641 563 Pétion, darling of the mulattoes though he was, never drew a color line. There is no suggestion in any of his actions that he gave preference in his appointments to people of his own color. He suppressed at least one insurrection led by men who would have liked to stir up color prejudice. He often tried by quiet irony to make his people less sensitive to their complexions. It is eloquent testimony to his fairness that the 200,000 blacks in the republic never faltered in their love for him. They had ample reason to mistrust the haughty and ambitious colored people, some of whom had lorded it over them in colonial days; but they knew that the President did not share their pretentious attitude. One look at the North, ruled by a black, was enough to convince any Southerner that his happiness was safer in the hands of a mulatto than in those of a Negro ex-slave. At Pétion's death, therefore, there was no demur at the succession to power of another light-skinned man.

175 643 642 Haitians of a later day have discussed [illegible] great length the wisdom of Pétion's parceling of state lands. His supporters (and they are numerous) as well as his critics generally keep the controversy on the lofty plane of ideals, intentions, and hypothetical contingencies. Pétion is praised for being generous to humble folk where all other rulers of his country had been severe; for being a realist in accepting and adjusting his measures to the limitations of the average Haitian's character; for building a patriotism upon love of one's own small plot of land; for ruling constitutionally, with his Senate, rather than dictatorially. Most especially, Pétion is the one man among the early rulers who seemed to have any realization of the human values involved. Material gain is desirable but not at the expense of liberty. Freedom means something, even in poverty.

The critics do not challenge Pétion's good intentions or integrity.

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they even comment upon his unselfish generosity, which seems to 175
have been entirely free of any desire for personal gain. They accuse 643
him rather of taking the easiest course—that of trying to pacify every 642
group in the republic: the masses, by giving them land and removing any external compulsion to work on it; the army, by making their enlistment profitable; the aspiring aristocrats, by validating their titles to estates and not challenging their prestige with a demand for responsibility. Strong states, the critics argue, are built on lines of discipline, not of perpetual yielding.

From an economic point of view a more valid criticism would ask 175
the simple question: what was the practical result of his policies? 433
Under the three previous Negro rulers agriculture had prospered, for these men kept state lands intact and forced the population to work; under Pétion, on the contrary, prosperity steadily declined with the division of land and the removal of compulsion. To expect a body of illiterate, inexperienced ex-slaves automatically to develop such economic virtues as industry, foresight, and thrift in a land which never knew any of these is not realistic, but merely quixotic.
The Haitian critic Magloire implies that Pétion was either completely 114
and cynically indifferent to common graft or else naively confident 643
that men newly free would somehow be preternaturally honest. He 423
goes into detail:

> Lands were distributed free, without order or method, each person taking what came his way and establishing himself as he could; graft and jobbery, under varied guises, governed the granting of concessions. As for properties in the towns, some people established themselves in upstairs apartments and others in ground-floor ones, without bothering to think of the lawsuits which might result from this disorder. In the sales made by the State, 50 and 100 and 200 gourdes were paid for real estate which was worth 10,000 and 20,000 and 40,000 gourdes or more. The administration put up for sale the property of towns, of communes, and of the State. Even buildings occupied in colonial days by officials, buildings whose construction had cost considerable sums, were bestowed on the people. . . .
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> By a too great fractioning of the national domain, and carried away by [82]
> the influence of false equalitarian and democratic ideas, Pétion brought [24]
> about what a modern writer calls "the forcible neglect of agriculture"[30] throughout the Republic.[31]

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[30] J. N. Léger, *Haiti: son histoire et ses détracteurs* (New York, 1907), p. 182.

[31] Auguste Magloire, *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social* (Port-au-Prince, 1909), pp. 160–163.

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175 114 433 Practically every contemporary foreign visitor contrasted the divergent policies of Christophe and Pétion to the overwhelming advantage of the former. One Englishman, intent upon defending the Negro against the charge of "natural indolence," went so far as to say that the majority of the people in the republic, although "possessed of small estates, on which they earned their living," were yet no less diligent than the forced laborers on Christophe's plantations in the North.[34] His only proof of this contention, however, was the greater volume of commerce at Port-au-Prince, capital of the republic, than at Cap-Henry (now Cap-Haïtien), capital of the kingdom.

175 433. 652 642 The economic case is strongly against Pétion. The decline of large-scale agriculture, the empty treasury, governmental purchase of surpluses when prices were low, debasing the coinage[35]—by such practical proofs, the republic was vastly less efficient than the stern dictatorship of the kingdom. But Pétion's people had freedom, while Christophe's were serfs. And Pétion's republic endured, to become reunited Haiti. The kingdom perished with Christophe.

4. *The Final Effort toward Plantation Life (1818–1826)*

175 ● 643 642 The mantle of Pétion fell in 1818 upon the shoulders of his meticulous secretary and minister, Jean-Pierre Boyer. Two years later, upon the death of Christophe, the kingdom of the North was once again united, without a struggle, to the South.[36] It is conceivable that the refined mulatto Boyer might have infused into his people a spirit of industry and ambition, now that tranquillity reigned after fourteen years of separation and warfare. The people of the North had had a long experience of intense activity, while those of the

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[34] W. W. Harvey, *Sketches of Hayti; from the Expulsion of the French, to the Death of Christophe* (London, 1827), pp. 361 ff.

[652] [35] Pétion's coins were so easily imitated that the country was inundated with counterfeit money. The government issued only *five* million dollars worth of this currency, but in 1818 twelve millions were in circulation, the *surplus* having been fabricated in Europe and the United States.

[175] [643] [642] [649] [36] In 1822–23 Boyer likewise succeeded, with little fighting, in bringing the Spanish two thirds of the island (Santo Domingo) into the republic. For the first time since 1697 the whole island was really unified under one rule. Toussaint had held it in 1800–1 and the Haitians claimed it thereafter, but real unity did not come until Boyer's time, when all the Spanish colonies in the New World were breaking away from their mother country. Santo Domingo regained its independence in 1844 shortly after the abdication of Boyer.

South in general had the most loyal feeling toward a government 175
which had been benevolently generous to them. A blend of the two 642
might have been fruitful. 643

It was not any want of patriotism that caused Boyer to miss his great opportunity but rather a defect of ability. Desiring, like Pétion, to lead rather than to drive his people, he nevertheless lacked even more than his former chief the force of personality which might have persuaded them to work hard for the greater glory of Haiti. Despising the brutal compulsion exercised by Dessalines and Christophe, which he regarded as savage and too closely resembling the earlier methods of slave owners; wishing to emulate solely the gentleness of his predecessor, Boyer hoped for a number of years that his people would become industrious of their own accord.
His hopes were frustrated. During his twenty-five-year presidency 175
the mass of Haitians became so indifferent to pecuniary inducements 433
that little work could be got from them beyond that required to
produce necessary food. As commerce declined, the President was [652]
driven to fresh issues of debased currency and to the opening of
mines in different parts of the country, though he knew that the [316]
richest mine Haiti possessed was its still fertile soil.

For the first seven years Boyer pursued a policy based on hopeful 175
expectation, refusing to inaugurate any of the forceful measures of 652
his black predecessors. But by 1823 the treasury, enriched though it 24
had been by the surplus from Christophe's exchequer, was empty; 433
in 1824 disbursements exceeded income. Convinced in 1825 that his
laissez-faire policy was failing to produce results, he decided to heed 466
the insistent counsel of those (including most of the aristocratic, landholding class) who advised the reëstablishment of a coercive system of agriculture. His officials showed him that nowhere in the country were sugar plantations any longer being cultivated on a great scale—except for a few estates run by government officials who could command the forced labor of convicts. The policy of offering cultivators a fourth of the total crop of a plantation as wages was luring practically no laborers to work.[37] Even the few owners who offered the fourth plus daily wages had no success. Quite simply, the average Haitian preferred to be his own master, working only when he wished, and particularly working only for himself and his family.

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[37] This fourth in wages must not be confused with the quarter in taxes abolished by Pétion. See page 48 for a discussion of the quarter-crop wage system.

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Convinced at last that the easygoing policy was a failure, Boyer devised by way of remedy a new set of agricultural laws. Where his predecessors in the North had forced action first and then issued simple laws to fix the practice, Boyer, always cerebral rather than active, planned a complete Code which was designed to call forth action. On May 1, 1826, following an address by the President, the Senate issued the Code Rural, an ingenious attempt of Boyer and his secretary-general, Inginac, to reorder the agricultural life of Haiti.

Never again in the history of the country was so detailed a scheme worked out. It was an attempt on a grand scale to order the life of all people for common prosperity. In addition to its own broad scope and elaborate detail, it was fortified by almost unanimous support among the aristocracy, not only the ex-peers of Christophe's defunct kingdom, but also the large landowners of the republic who under Pétion had never known large incomes. In considering the Code, one cannot restrain a certain admiration of Boyer's ingenious mind. Yet it marked the end rather than the beginning of plantation agriculture, for it utterly failed of its purpose. It was the impressive monument over the tomb of state control.

To examine it further, we must desert the world of men for one of pure economic device. The journey is hardly one of discovery, for Boyer and his aides were simply attempting to freshen up for use the methods which had served colonial Saint-Domingue and feudal Haiti. For all the tedium of a voyage through the mazes of an economic plan which came to naught, the Code will be found significant as marking the end of a way of life, even when the way which succeeded it had already begun to take form.

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The dominating principle of the Code was the Haitian's "obligation" to work on the land. To this end, the worker was once more legally attached to the soil. Every individual who was not a public functionary, and who had not private means or a profession—in plain English, every Haitian except the aristocrat, the official, the artisan, and the soldier—was bound to the land, with no right to separate himself from it except in case of imminent danger. An agricultural worker might apply to the local *juge de paix*[38] for permission to quit the countryside to live in a town or village, but the judge was not to give the permission without being assured of the morality of the

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[38] A functionary who combined the offices of local judge, justice of the peace, and recorder.

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175 423 up so many of these, there was no way short of a revolution to reconstitute the now parceled estates. Obviously the Code did not envisage the control of serfs by small property owners, yet there were more small owners than large.

175 184 466 In the third place, the Spanish-speaking masses of the eastern part of the island had never experienced the kind of forced labor with which most Haitians had been at one time or another familiar. Their noncoöperation made enforcement difficult.

175 647 Finally, the administration of so detailed a plan called for the establishment, at once and yet in complete order, of a fully trained corps of bureaucrats, perfectly coöperating with each other, most of them educated, and all incorruptibly honest. If every literate person in the state had been drafted for service, Boyer could not have filled all the offices required by the Code.

175 465 434 After brief and piecemeal experience with the law in operation, moreover, even the few remaining large landholders turned against it. While they approved the provisions for forced labor, they discovered that to turn over to the workers a quarter or half of the annual crop, in a falling world market, gave too slim a profit.[42] Without the support even of its original sponsors, failure of the law was inevitable.

175 648 652 These factors alone would have been enough to kill the Code; but its real death blow came from an entirely different quarter. The year before the agricultural laws were passed, Boyer had achieved what he considered to be a political master stroke. He had made a financial settlement with France whereby Haiti, in return for a large sum in cash and regular annual payments for sixty years thereafter, should receive full recognition of independence from France; also the former mother country would renounce all claims to any properties in the country. Boyer had felt that the chief debilitating influence on the political and economic life of his people was the constant dread that France might one day return to claim her lost colony. To rid the nation of that incubus, therefore, seemed to him a high feat of statesmanship, no matter what the financial cost.[43]

[433 24] [42] Coffee, now the staple crop of Haiti, was meeting competition from the other coffee-producing countries of the world. To put the sugar manufactories into working condition again called for more money than was available.

[643 645] [43] Boyer's hand was forced to a certain extent by France, which had been exerting diplomatic pressure upon Haiti; the President, however, seemed to regard the settlement as a distinct coup.

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Color prejudice, in so far as a mass of people is concerned, is generally one-sided, directed by the upper group at the lower. The ordinary illiterate worker between 1820 and 1840 was inclined to accept without much question the superiority of the lighter-skinned Haitians. Resentment was often present, and envy, but hardly prejudice. The real contest developed between the colored élite and the blacks of ambition. The latter had reason to feel proud of their rise from slavery; many had shown ability, and felt themselves the mental and moral equals of the mulattoes; the men who had broken the power of the French, ended slavery, and founded the state were Negroes—and now Haiti was being ruled by mulattoes. The contest between the two groups was the obverse side of prejudice. The envied minority, jealously guarding their distinction, were generally conscious of prejudices which they rationalized with pronouncements about superior mentality and innate qualities. They would concede the difference between an educated black and a mere peasant, but would still cling to the feeling that all the culture in the world would not make the educated Negro a peer of the mulatto.

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Government documents of the period can hardly be expected to call attention to color prejudice and its concomitant resentments. To foreign observers, however, it was immediately apparent and noteworthy as a dominant characteristic of the country. Testimony is unanimous as to its existence; more important, the commentators all agreed that it was growing. An acute Frenchman called Boyer "the slow martyr of his color,"[56] being a mulatto in a republic of blacks: his color made Boyer suspect, so that the President had to spend most of his time and energy trying to avoid conflicts on this issue. It is entirely possible that Boyer's dearest schemes, particularly the enforcement of the Code Rural, failed primarily because the army was controlled by Negroes, whom the President dared not drive too hard; while only the army could have enforced faithful performance by the black laborers. An American doctor stated in 1838 that "the mulattoes, to preserve the sceptre of power in the possession of their caste, are driven to compliances which a negro president would feel himself empowered to spurn from him as the basest infringement on his dignity."[57]

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[56] Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, Saint-Domingue, I, 211. This observation is much more to the point than the specious remarks which follow, attributing Boyer's inaction partly to the enervating effects of the tropical climate.

[57] Brown, op. cit., II, 259.

175 an ineffective government, momentarily in the hands of colored
563 élite. Attempting to dominate politics was a numerically small group
565 of colored people and a still smaller group of Negroes. Although
[701] prevailingly black, the army might be, and in the later nineteenth
[669] century was continually, used by whichever group offered more.
A third power, a middle class, might have balanced these antagonistic factions. Lacking such a moderating influence, Haiti was the victim of recurrent revolutionary movements.

175 At the time of Boyer, actual democracy would have been no safeguard,
178 for it would have meant the supremacy of ignorance. His
642 rule was the beginning of unfortunate days for Haiti. After the
643 auspicious opening years, the President became an impotent onlooker
● as his country declined. It is instructive to compare the Haiti of Dessalines and Christophe with the Haiti of 1843, only one generation later.[62]

175 The Haiti of 1806 had been a beehive of activity. Soldiers, foremen,
178 and policemen then stood over the workers with lianes to
642 force them to labor for the benefit of their state. Production was
433 carefully planned, an ordered hierarchy making every person in the
466 country responsible to another higher than himself until the ruler
was reached at the pinnacle. The cardinal fault of any laborer was to shirk at his task. The year 1843, on the contrary, found Haiti in a condition of quiescence which, to those who remembered the old days, resembled torpor. The central government had ceased to drive its citizens, and its half-hearted attempts at persuasion were futile. Overseers, drivers of gangs of workers, soldiers whose duty it was to enforce labor, had disappeared from the scene. Every man was his own master.

175 The standard of living in 1806 as in 1843 was low; but in the earlier
178 year there had been a promise of great things to come once Haiti
511 had rebuilt what war had destroyed. The succeeding years, however,
failed to inculcate into the people a desire for any higher standard of life. Country dwellers were benighted; ignorance deepened the habit

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[62] Haiti has never had an accurate census, so that it is impossible even to estimate
[162] the total population of the country either in 1806 or in 1843. The figures of 380,000
[175] and 800,000 given by some authors for the two years are mere guesses. Likewise, one can only deduce the proportion of people in the main economic and social categories; probably seventy-five per cent of the Haitians were serfs in 1806 and the same percentage peasants in 1843; the "aristocracy," including all who did not derive a living by manual labor or army service, could hardly have reached five per cent in either year; the army, house servants, day laborers in the towns, and petty businessmen would make up the other twenty per cent.

IV

CASTE LINES BECOME PERMANENT

175 THE contrast between the golden days of forced labor and the
178 stagnating mediocrity of Boyer's Haiti was as vivid to thinking
Haitian aristocrats as it was to foreign whites. Particularly the
young "intellectuals" of the 'thirties who knew something of the
progress taking place in the rest of the Western World felt that the
time had come to stem the wave of economic disintegration at home.
In a series of pronouncements they pointed out that the advancement
of Haiti had "been constantly slowed up for some time. . . . Haiti is
stationary, is retrograde: we need no other proof of it than this
frightful uncertainty about the future which so deeply disturbs all
serious minds and sincere patriots." One may discount the phrase
175 about "sincere patriots," for peasants were patriots even though
668 undisturbed by the economic stagnation. The agitation for reform
won a wide following among all the élite who cherished a glowing
recollection of earlier days.

Leaders of the young men called upon Boyer in 1838 to introduce
stronger methods of forced labor; but Boyer, remembering the fate
of his Code Rural in which he had tried to do precisely this, could
think of no effective way of tinkering again with the economic
system. From the young men he received the most contradictory
advice as to specific methods. The result of the appeal was therefore
merely continued inaction by the government. The agitators, excellent
175 critics if poor reformers, accordingly persisted in their campaign,
668 adding new converts to their cause until the movement produced
669 a crisis. Revolution broke out in January 1843 at Torbeck in
643 the South, and rapidly spread toward the capital; within two months
● Boyer and his faithful secretary-general, Inginac, had departed
for exile.[1]

[643 159] [1] Boyer went first to Jamaica, and then to Paris. In the latter capital King Louis-Philippe gave him an audience and called him "prince." Boyer replied, "Sire, I am no prince. I have merely been the head of a small republic." The King of France thereupon affectionately pressed Boyer's hand, remarking, "When one has governed a million people for twenty-five years, he is raised to the rank of princes." . . . Boyer died in Paris in 1850.

Political history of the next seventy-two years is a complicated 175
story, of which only enough need be told here to illuminate the
evolution of caste and social distinctions. Even a short summary 643
reveals the bewildering confusion. Of the twenty-two heads of state
between 1843 and 1915 only one served out his prescribed term of
office;[2] three died while serving, one was blown up with his palace,
one presumably poisoned, and one hacked to pieces by a mob; one
resigned. The other fourteen were deposed by revolution after
incumbencies ranging in length from three months to twelve years.

The Revolution of 1843 brought back into national prominence
the whole matter of color and caste. The young revolutionaries, 175
mostly light-skinned, seem to have assumed that their group was 669
permanently in control. With cavalier highhandedness they set about
capturing the last stronghold of Negro eminence: the army. They
soon found, however, that they had caught a Tartar; their attempt to
rule was fatal to them and their clique.

In the Constitutional Assembly convened to make a new constitu- 175
tion for the country, they professed astonishingly democratic doc-
trines. Proclaiming that the fault of former governments had been 668
reliance upon military power, they now proposed to make civil 646
power paramount by allowing the common people to vote. Since
up to this time the franchise had been strictly limited to army officers 642
and anciens libres, such a radical departure as general suffrage makes 641
no sense unless conceived as an attempt to break the power of the 701
Negro-controlled army, for surely the élite had no confidence in the
wisdom of the peasantry. Weight is given to this explanation by the
paradoxical action of the revolutionaries in promoting to high army
rank some of the strongest mulatto partisans of civil government.

The new constitution was an immediate failure. Most of the 175
colored élite condemned the giving of voting rights to peasants and 642
workers; the army chiefs, generally black and illiterate, some of them
aging veterans of 1803, bitterly resented being made subservient to 641
young, inexperienced civil officers; in fact, even the new mulatto
president, Rivière-Hérard, had no conception of government other
than by military dictatorship.

Not only was the constitution a failure; so was the government of 175
the young revolutionaries. A part of their weakness lay in their 643

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[2] The presidential term varied under different constitutions; some allowed a four-year term with the right of reelection, some six years with no reelection.

175 choice of a leader. Not gifted with administrative ability, Hérard
643 blundered first by imprisoning one of the most popular Negro
leaders in the country, thereby turning much of the population of
the South against him. Next, learning of conspiracies in the Spanish
[669] end of the island, he tried to stamp out revolt by exile and jail sentences,
only to precipitate there a real revolution for independence.
In his fight against the Dominican separatists he was roundly defeated,
and his prestige sank rapidly to the vanishing point. Within
two months after his inauguration, he had only one third of the
island left over which to attempt to rule. Within a year he was out of
power altogether and with him the colored people.

175 The Revolution of 1844, although supported by certain old friends
669 of Boyer, was chiefly a movement of Negroes—followers of the
imprisoned black, Salomon; peasants from the South who had been
promised much by the previous year's revolutionaries and had got
nothing; and particularly the Negro army clique. The significant part
of the new revolution was its announced purpose, to lessen the influence
of the colored group in government, to have a black president,
and to dispossess certain reputedly well-to-do citizens by
[643] dividing their estates among the people. Quickly successful, the
insurgents promoted to the presidency the illiterate octogenarian
black general, Guerrier, who in Christophe's kingdom had been
Duke of Marmalade[3] and Duke of Avancé.

175 For the first time in a quarter-century the Negro element was
again in the saddle, where it was to remain for the next fifteen years.
643 Everyone recognized Guerrier's personal courage and admired the
662 common sense which made him prefer conciliation to unnecessary
violence as a method of government, but the colored people were
shocked at having to live under the rule of another black ex-slave.
The idea evoked grim memories. Knowing Guerrier's addiction to
drink, the colored faction managed to make him a tool for their own
use, so that his brief administration, ending with his death in 1845,
was generally known as a "government of understudies." Guerrier
was followed in the presidency by another black, likewise an octo-
175 genarian: Louis Pierrot, the handsome brother-in-law of King
643 Christophe. But Pierrot was even more ignorant than Guerrier and

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[554] [3] This title generally evokes amusement among non-Haitians. Christophe had merely named his peers after districts whose names had been given by French planters in the eighteenth century. Another of his noblemen was a Count of Limonade.

already showed signs of senile dementia; his tyrannical crotchets speedily raised up a revolt against him, and in 1846 he gave way to still another black, General Riché. Like his two predecessors, Riché was aged and illiterate. Nevertheless, he began his rule auspiciously by putting an end to dictatorship and surrounding himself with wise counselors. In 1847, just when the country was beginning to appreciate his good qualities, he died a victim of drugs taken to increase his vigor. 175 643

These four presidents, who had among them ruled less than four years, did not appreciably alter the social situation, for they had all been preoccupied with the suppression of revolutions. But Haiti was still in a position to take some definite step toward economic progress, education of the people, conciliation of the antagonistic colored and black elements. Because of a stupid whim, the country was precipitated down exactly the opposite path. The Senate gathered to select Riché's successor found itself unable to rally a majority vote for any candidate; whereupon one Senator proposed the name of an ignorant, entirely unillustrious, black general, Faustin Soulouque. The chamber immediately gave him a majority, for the supporters of each candidate saw in this complete nonentity a chance for another "government by understudies," in which they themselves would actually rule. When the Senatorial delegation arrived to inform Soulouque of his election, that unimpressive Negro, lying stretched out in his hammock, refused at first to take it seriously. He had more than once been the victim of practical jokes, and this looked like a particularly malicious one.[4] It took persuasion to convince him that he was indeed the new president of Haiti.

Soulouque's accession to power marked the beginning of a twelve-year nightmare for Haiti. During his first year of office the new president walked warily over the unfamiliar terrain. Those who had named him for their own ends felt justified in their scheme, for each opposing group still looked forward to controlling the government with Soulouque as a front. Meanwhile, however, the President had been carefully observing everything that went on around him, arriving at his own judgment of men and measures.

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[4] Many years before, Boyer had prophesied a period of disorder in Haiti and is reported to have said that in such a time "any man in Haiti might become president, even that stupid Negro over there," indicating Soulouque. It is told that Soulouque mumbled, "Please, Mr. President, don't make a fool of me."

175 Suddenly, without warning, he reversed what had been mistaken for
● 643 docile inactivity, and assumed complete personal command of the
reins of office. By means of a well-organized body of secret police,
[625] he inspired his own counselors with fear not only for their positions
but for their lives. Although illiterate, Soulouque never signed a
bill presented to him by his ministers until he was sure he knew its
essential core. The hopeful "understudies" were forcibly awakened
to the realization that they were hoist on their own petard.

175 The colored element was particularly apprehensive at Soulouque's
643 amazing activity, for the President was clearly setting himself against
563 their group, both in the cabinet and out. Determining clandestinely
669 to get rid of their puppet before he became a Frankenstein's monster
to destroy his creators, they fomented a new revolution. This, however, proved to be a strategic error of the first magnitude, for the President was already much stronger than they imagined. The insurrection was quashed with massacre and attendant frightfulness. In the aftermath, as Bouzon mordantly remarks, "the republic was calm—with all the tranquillity of a tomb!" By their ineptitude, the colored group had now made themselves completely insecure.

175 In the second year of his *régime* Soulouque decided to imitate
565 Dessalines by turning the state into an empire. His coronation was
643 extremely gaudy, as well as expensive. Calling himself Emperor
642 Faustin I, he created a peerage drawn chiefly from among his black
generals—four princes, fifty-nine dukes, and numerous counts,
[555] barons, and knights. This was merely outward pomp to gratify their
craving for prestige, for they had no functions to perform, nor even
the necessity of Christophe's peers to pay for their regalia. As nobles
they were given no responsibilities in directing economic activity
nor any increased political power over districts of the empire. The
Emperor's own vanity was flattered by having a peerage. He ruled
175 as an autocrat with blatant despotism. For ten years following the
643 coronation Haiti had to accustom itself to costly expeditions against
721 the Dominican Republic, nearly all ending in defeat for Haiti. The
outcome of these intermittent wars was neither gain nor loss of
648 territory by either side, but only temporary rule of occupied districts.
728 Haiti likewise had to accustom itself to sudden executions, to the
shabby grandeur of court display, and to financial trickery which
would not have deceived a schoolboy. While the heads of his opponents and even his loyal counselors fell, Soulouque's infantile
"empire" tottered to economic ruin.

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"empire" tottered to economic ruin. Graft, default on the debt, 175
increasing deficits, and debased currency were the order of the day, 643
and so continued until 1839, when the accumulation of anger over 652
the useless wars and the humiliating defeats made the Emperor so 669
unpopular that a new and more carefully planned revolution accomplished his downfall.

Fifteen years of administration by Negro rulers had broken the 175
political power of the colored élite. Only three light-skinned men 643
became president thereafter until the occupation of Haiti by the 178
American Marines in 1915; in the seventy-two years following 564
Boyer's downfall, mulattoes ruled during only eight. The army under a black general was too powerful, a colored president too hampered by suspicion, to make the political game worth the candle. The colored élite, therefore, adapted themselves to existing conditions as best they could, controlling the business life of Haiti, filling the law offices and, because of their literacy, the secretaryships of state, and indulging in honorific cultural pursuits.

In the years after Soulouque the basic realities of Haitian life were 175
changed hardly at all by shifting political administrations. Some of the 643
presidents were mildly progressive, many were indifferent; still more 660
were actually harmful; but the lives of the mass of peasants were not often touched by presidential vagaries. Politics was an affair almost wholly of townspeople, of the army, the élite, and the pseudo-élite. Revolutions, counterrevolutions, movements of reform, international tangles, financial woes, and most of the other complications to which unstable states are heir, absorbed the attention of rulers and upper-class folk who were politically inclined.

Constitutions were made by presidents and changed by their suc- 175
cessors; the Senate passed contradictory laws in the same session if 642
the chief executive so recommended; the courts were presided over 671
by the president's men. Haitian law in the latter half of the nineteenth
century was what the president's immediate strength and wish made 692
it—or else it was folk custom, undisturbed by the rulers.

Never once, in the three quarters of a century after Boyer's time, 175
did Haiti approach the high standard of production known in 178
colonial days or in the early years of independence. The pattern of 433
Haitian social and economic life became fixed in this seventy-five
years. Haiti became a country of small-scale tillage by a peasant 565
population, with only enough external trade to provide moderate 439

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178 fortunes, that is, a few thousands of dollars, for a small number of élite, and to make the presidency a position economically rewarding
565 enough to justify revolutionary conspiracies. The growth of a
433 peasantry set in train during the long régime of Boyer continued,
439 unbroken even by the numerous insurrections, until fixed in the mores. Land owned by the countryfolk was divided and redivided
[423] among their heirs, so that even holdings of moderate size became
[428] smaller.

Not one of the twenty-two rulers following Boyer made the
175 slightest effort to return the country to the forced labor system of
643 Dessalines and Christophe. They seemed to recognize the inevita-
566 bility of a peasant way of life, or at least the impossibility of luring
423 the people back to directed labor after a long experience of freedom. On the contrary, several presidents still further parceled the land.

President Guerrier, for example, the very year after Boyer was
175 deposed, put on sale at moderate prices those state lands in the North
643 not reserved for public use.[5] If the revolutionaries of 1843 had hoped
423 to bring back Christophe's system of forced labor, their hopes were doomed to disappointment because of the state's need of immediate income. Christophe's state land areas were now broken up in the one part of the country where a few large plantations still existed.

President Geffrard in 1862 gave his blessing to small ownership, the
175 basis of peasantry. Whereas Pétion's laws had prohibited sales of land
643 in parcels less than fifteen acres, Geffrard's law regularized the leasing
421 and sale of national property in lots of fifteen acres *at most*. Geffrard
423 was the first president openly to admit that many government lands had been lost to citizens by squatting. In an endeavor to give legality to land held by squatters' rights, his law demanded that squatters register their claims, announcing that within a short time there would be no further dismemberment of the national patrimony except by grants and sales.[6] Few registrations were made, however, for the Haitian peasant had already acquired a suspicion of legal documents he could not read or understand, and he could see no reason for legalizing a status in which, with the squatter's tenacity and inertia, he already felt himself secure.

000 Haiti was in constant financial straits. Money had to be borrowed

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[5] By a law of September 23, 1844.

[6] Law of August 14, 1862. The articles cited here are 2 and 4.

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Haiti was in constant financial straits. Money had to be borrowed

abroad; then paid back at the promised time or a foreign warship 175
would appear at some Haitian port. The steady drain of annual 652
indemnity payments to France,[7] the cost of subduing revolutionary movements, and the large sum eaten up even in times of peace by wages to the army made successive presidents continue to yield government land for small sums of ready cash, in spite of Geffrard's announcement that no more state lands would be alienated. Nissage Saget, coming to power by a successful revolution, paid out fifteen acres to each soldier who fought in his campaign in the South.[8] The [171]
straits of the government resembled those of the Continental Congress in America during the Revolution.

Another impulse to parcel the land came during the administration 175
of President Lysius Salomon (1879–88). The debt to France had 643
finally, after half a century, been paid off; that incubus removed, 671
Salomon instituted numerous reforms, financial, military, educa- 423
tional. On February 26, 1883, he signed a law by which every citizen [648]
of Haiti might conceivably become a landowner even if he lacked money to buy land. Upon receipt of a written agreement to cultivate certain tropical crops—specifically, sugar, coffee, cotton, cacao, and tobacco—the government would grant provisional title to a portion of fifteen to twenty-five acres of land taken from the public domain. The grant became final if, after a period of from two to five years, three quarters of the land had been effectively cultivated.

Five hundred requests were made in 1884 for such grants, and twelve hundred in the following year.[9] Thereafter one finds no records of applications for land; the peasants had discovered the hidden trap in this apparent generosity. How could a peasant with a tiny farm lacking implements and tools, not to mention ready cash, be expected to cultivate important crops on fifteen or twenty acres of land? He would have to cut down trees, uproot wild plants, fertilize the ground, purchase equipment and seeds, and then wait several years for a crop. As Thoby says, "And even then he was not a

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[7] See above, pp. 70–71.

[8] Law of July 12, 1870. In August of the same year, Nissage required an inventory to be taken of state lands remaining.

[9] J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Manuel d'histoire d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1934), p. 317, cites [114]
these figures. They are contested by Dr. F. Dalencour, *Le Sauvetage national par le* [423]
retour à la terre, p. 31, who maintains that only 800 applications came in altogether. Here, as elsewhere, Haitian records are incomplete.

175 643 671 423 proprietor in the true sense of the word, for he might not change his crops and cultivate bananas, potatoes, yams, peas, or other foodstuffs."[12] Critics of Salomon point out that these conditional grants were designed to make of the peasant a simple fiscal workman for the state, to force him once more to labor for the public rather than for himself. The legislators of 1883 were preoccupied not with the welfare of the peasant, but solely with the increase of production and of fiscal revenue.

The law of 1883, then, like the Code Rural of 1826, fell into desuetude. The peasant was canny enough to see that passing a law did not change realities: he might still squat on government land and yet not be thrown off by the government. Both Boyer's Code and Salomon's law, although of entirely different inspiration, tried to regiment the Haitian peasant in agricultural lines beneficial to state finances but uncongenial to himself.

175 423 Up to the time of the American Occupation of 1915, there were no other measures of much influence upon the status of the peasant. The whole impulse of the common people seemed to be toward the acquisition of plots of land for themselves. By the indifference or impotence of the state, they were allowed to install themselves upon government lands, there to found families and pass on the property upon which they had settled. Thus occurred what might be called a "natural"—certainly unplanned and automatic—development of small property. At first it came at the expense of the great domains; next, through allowing state leases to expire and be given cheaply into the hands of small farmers; finally there were the grants and sales at low prices to thousands of soldiers.

Time validated the peasants' claims, but the state has never formally done so. Legally it might be argued that only a small fraction of the population of Haiti has an indisputable right to the land on which it lives. By strict interpretation most of the peasants are still squatters whom the government might dispossess. The American Occupation, in view of this confusion, tried in businesslike fashion to survey the land and establish property rights. The task proved so extremely difficult that it was soon given up. It met with the stubborn refusal of the peasants to state their claims or take any interest in legalizing their rights. No administration has been foolhardy enough

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[12] Armand Thoby, *La Question agraire en Haïti*, p. 43.

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V

CASTES SINCE THE AMERICAN OCCUPATION OF 1915

IN 1915 American Marines entered Haiti. One of the major reasons for their intervention may have been economic; certainly this explanation or accusation has been frequently made by opponents of American dollar diplomacy. Nevertheless, the ground was well prepared by political incompetency in Haiti in the years preceding 1915, and the reason given to the world by American statesmen to justify the Occupation was essentially a political one: Haiti was in a state of anarchy. 175 648 642

As has been abundantly shown, Haiti never had a semblance of democracy. From its beginning the country was governed either by a despot—the president, who might or might not be benevolent—or by an oligarchy. The failure of Haitian politics from 1843 onward was the inability of the titular ruler and the oligarchy to work in harmony; indeed, the oligarchy was continually divided against itself. Only three of Haiti's presidents from 1843 to 1915 were more than mediocre statesmen.[1] It is merely a question of degree, whether such phrases as "political and economic stagnation" and "social inertia" are more accurately descriptive than words like decay and degeneration. 175 642

A brief résumé of politics between 1910 and 1915 will set the stage for a view of the Occupation in relation to the development of caste. 175 643 642

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[1] With this judgment by a foreigner Haitians may obviously disagree. In the author's opinion the presidents Geffrard (1859–67), Salomon (1879–88), and Hyppolite (1889–96) were relatively distinguished men. To Geffrard may be credited the following: increase of educational facilities; construction of much-needed public works; an attempt to form a true middle class, even by importing Negroes from the United States; reduction of the size of the army by half; healing of a sixty-year breach with the Holy See, so that Haiti might once again have approved priests; the opening of closed ports to commerce; and improvement of agricultural methods. Salomon was an educated man with European experience; his achievements were to create a national bank, establish a sound currency, retire the public debt, lower tariffs, bring in schoolteachers from France, open rural schools, bring Haiti into the International Postal Union. Hyppolite's chief triumphs were in the field of public works—much-needed buildings, bridges, docks, telephone and telegraph lines. 175 643 65

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175 ●643 642 The twentieth century began inauspiciously with a succession of dull incompetents in the presidency. General Sam's administration (1896-1902) had been distinguished only by lethargic calm. Nord Alexis (1902-8), over eighty when elected, prolonged the peace by doing nothing to disturb it; he solved his financial problems by issuing paper money, while his political "policy" involved nothing more significant than the sponsoring of festivals to celebrate Haiti's hundred years of independence. The mild revolution which displaced him substituted a president more puerile than oppressive, Antoine Simon (1908-11), who is best revealed in a terse comment by a Haitian author: "When he passed by on a street or through a public square, everyone, foreigners as well as Haitians, must stand still, even stop smoking, and respectfully salute the Head of State. At any instant, without reason, the functionaries of the capital might be called to the Palace to endure his interminable and insipid discourses."[2] A revolution cut short his tedious régime.

Within the next four years six presidents rose and fell. Their administrations were worse than ephemeral; indeed, they hardly deserve the name of governments. Not one of the six had a happy time in office; the first was blown up with his palace, the second is generally thought to have been poisoned, the next three were quickly deposed by revolutions, and the last, after massacring his imprisoned political enemies, was horribly cut into small bits by an infuriated mob. Anarchy then ensued.

175 652 648 For years Haitian presidents had staved off financial collapse by heavy borrowing abroad. United States financial interests were involved in the Bank of Haiti and in a railroad company, while the American government, through its Monroe Doctrine, was disturbed by French and German threats to collect their Haitian debts by force. When President Guillaume Sam[3] was hacked to pieces by the mob, the United States landed Marines from gunboats which were conveniently just outside the harbor of Port-au-Prince. Beginning on July 28, 1915, the Occupation lasted for nineteen years.

128 648 With the question of America's justification in the matter of occupying Haiti this book cannot pretend to deal. As with most large matters of policy, convincing arguments can be offered on both sides. The important fact for this study is that the presence of white

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[2] J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Manuel d'histoire d'Haïti*, p. 338.
[3] Not to be confused with Simon Sam, who had ruled twenty years earlier.

American Marines in Haiti during the next two decades had definite effects upon the social life of the country. 128 648

One of the most immediately observable results was the termination of the long political domination by the blacks, and reëstablishment of the colored élite in government control. The four presidents since 1915, Dartiguenave (1915–22), Borno (1922–30), Roy (1930), and Vincent (1930–41), have all been light-skinned. The United States forces had a definite hand in the election of the first two of these men. America's concern was certainly not to return the government to the colored group, but rather to have as titular heads of state men who were educated, temperate of mind, civil in manners—and, of course, mentally "supple" enough to carry out policies agreeable to the State Department at Washington. Since education had for long been a perquisite of the élite only, and since colored élite outnumbered black élite, the chances were good that the choice should fall upon a colored man in 1915 and 1922. Even so, it may have been pure coincidence that the Americans supported mulattoes rather than Negroes; it can hardly be coincidence that the mulatto presidents since 1915 have filled the key offices with colored men. They would assuredly maintain that they had tried to select persons best fitted for office. The fact remains that there are few blacks in the important ministries. 175 648 643 563

This return to political power of the colored element was one of the most sweeping transformations effected by the Marines, for once again, as in the golden days of Pétion and Boyer, political prestige accompanied and fortified social position. Since 1843 one black or almost black general had succeeded another as president of the republic, and the élite class had perforce to endure them. Socially tolerated these parvenu generals had been, but accepted never. When the Marines arranged the election of President Dartiguenave they effectively reversed the tradition of a century. Since 1915 there have been several Negro candidates for the presidency; in coming elections there are sure to be others; for the present and the near future it is safe to say there will be no more black non-élite presidents.

Such a prophecy is made with a certain assurance because of another result of the Occupation: reform of the army. All true friends of Haiti knew, as most Haitian statesmen had understood for a hundred years, that the huge standing army was an unmitigated burden to the economic, political, and social stability of the country. 175 701 648 177

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966.

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plausible, such as the race prejudice displayed by many individual 175
Marines;[4] the unnecessary slaughter in the suppression of caco (guerrilla) 648
rebellions in the North; the continued holding of offices (and 642
salaries) by Americans too impatient to train Haitians, as by the Agreement of 1915 they were supposed to do; the fostering rather than elimination of military psychology among the people by the presence of armed Marines.

The campaign against the Occupation was generally on the highest 175
level of patriotism, for it threw out one variation after another on 648
the same theme: We Haitians are not being allowed to govern 642
ourselves. Some realists knew that their hurt national pride was 668
accompanied by disappointment that certain salaries were not reaching Haitian pockets, certain prestige of office not redounding to the credit of Haitian men. What if the real reason for opposition were not the openly avowed one? The Marines must go! Order had been restored and government reëstablished. It was patent that any administration which could effect the withdrawal would be immensely popular: it was equally patent that if the Americans left the country, the benefits of their efficiency and material improvement would remain as a tangible boon to Haiti.

President Sténio Vincent, elected in 1930 after a campaign in 175
which the Americans did not interfere, began the negotiations with 648
Washington. With President Hoover he made headway toward 642
reforms, but President Roosevelt's attitude was more actively cooperative. In 1934 Vincent had a series of conferences with the President of the United States; the latter, in pursuit of his good-neighbor policy, persuaded the American Senate to order the Occupation at an end and turn over without cost to Haiti many buildings,
supplies, and equipment used by the Marines. Vincent personally [643]
benefited from the withdrawal of 1934. He called himself Haiti's [159]
"second Liberator,"[5] and made the anniversary of the American [527]
departure a national holiday. Indirectly the élite also benefited for [563]
now, entrenched in office, they could govern without white supervision. The material equipment was there to be enjoyed by the whole people at no further expense to them.

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[4] The United States government in the early days had sent Marines from the Southern States to Haiti, on the theory that they would, from long acquaintance with Negroes, know how to "handle" them. This stupid blunder was shortly rectified.

[5] Dessalines had, of course, been the first.

revolt of the slaves (1791). Priests fled or went into hiding with the
175 other whites, so that Masses lapsed or were said by religious but
771 unordained mulattoes. Upon his accession to power in Haiti
643 Toussaint L'Ouverture made several attempts to rehabilitate religion in
659 the country, for the Church he felt was a stable institution which
might help in giving order to the turbulent land. He tried to accomplish the return of priests to the island parishes and churches. There are indications that Toussaint was not himself deeply religious; his pronouncements are formal, but one cannot say that they appear to be deeply felt. In his proclamation of October 10, 1798, announcing the expulsion of the English, he orders thanks to the God of Hosts, recommends to his chiefs of corps that the soldiers pray morning and evening and faithfully attend Mass on Sundays. In a public address he enjoins upon parents the duty of teaching the catechism to their children.

175 The use of Catholicism as an aid to statecraft is apparent in his
659 official dealings with the Church. His constitution of May 9, 1801,
795 states that "the Catholic religion, apostolic and Roman, is the sole
religion publicly professed." To obtain priests he besought the return of many who had fled the slave insurrection; he likewise turned to France, but France at this time was less than ardent in religion; nor were French priests likely to wish to come to an island ruled by blacks, particularly one which Napoleon was quite obviously planning to subdue. Toussaint addressed himself, therefore, to a schismatic abbé, Grégoire by name, in whom he saw a friend. Whether Grégoire might have helped him to establish the Catholic Church firmly as a part of Haitian life, with only a handful of repatriated colonial priests, we cannot know, for in 1802 the final war of independence began and the island, in convulsion, had no time for spiritual matters.

2. *Catholicism in Independent Haiti*

175 Dessalines, the passionate, violent, and licentious founder of the
643 new state, although not an enemy of the Church was not its active
659 friend. In his slaughter of whites he spared several priests who had
795 come to the country under Toussaint's persuasion, either because
these clerics were obviously inoffensive or might later prove useful to him. Just as he controlled every other detail of Haitian life, he was determined to direct church affairs. He reserved to himself the right to fix the limits of jurisdiction of each priest and to nominate, even

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966

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to appoint, curés to the vacant parishes. His independence of action 643
could not fail to give offense to Church authorities. One of his first 659
appointees was a black ex-slave, Félix, who had been a drum major 795
in the native army. Félix was made curé in the important town of [773]
Saint-Marc.

The constitution of his empire (May, 1805) indicates that Des- 175
salines did not intend to make himself head of the Church, but rather
planned a complete separation of Church and State. Article 50 reads: 795
"The law admits no dominant religion"; while the next article 642
grants freedom to all cults and refuses state support to any denomina- 659
tion or minister. No attack was made, therefore, upon Catholicism,
yet the disestablishment of that Church was a serious blow to its
prestige. Not in the specific provisions regarding religion was the
Church most weakened, but rather in the "liberality" of articles
dealing with actions upon which the Church had taken a firm moral
stand. Thus Article 14 declared that "marriage is an act purely civil [582]
and authorized by the government," while Article 15 permits [586]
divorce by the state. Early laws of the empire still further under-
mined the position of Church doctrine. Illegitimate children were [848]
granted the same legal rights as legitimate ones—a generous provision which removed one of the strong reasons for marriage; separation of husband and wife except by divorce was forbidden, and this prohibition practically encouraged the divorce disapproved by the Church; finally, the grounds upon which divorce might be allowed were broader than those existing anywhere else in the Western World at the time: mutual consent, application from one party to the marriage, or simple allegation of incompatibility of temperament or character.

From the promulgation of this constitution in 1805 and for the 175
next fifty-five years, Haiti was in open schism from the Roman 795
Catholic Church. The Holy See refused to recognize either the 648
Haitian state or the provisions of its constitution, and it declined to 771
allow priests to enter the country. Certain Haitian presidents were
friendly enough to Catholicism, and others were openly desirous 178
of reëstablishing a state religion, but the breach once made was not healed by mere good wishes. The longer the schism endured, the farther the people grew away from the doctrines and practices of a religion in which they had never been firmly grounded. At the moment of independence, when all minds were more open to new

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795 ideas than in later years, the habits of regular attention to religious
648 duties might have been fixed; by 1860 it was too late. Religion
777 existed during those years, but it was a strange gallimaufry of
178 Catholicism and folk belief.

On the whole, the rulers of young Haiti were tolerant of the
175 Catholic Church even to the point of advancing its interests, in so far
795 as these might benefit the state. Their pronouncements and actions,
642 nevertheless, were not those of ardent personal believers. Pétion's
● 648 constitution of the republic in 1806 once more established Catholicism as the official Church. What it gave with one hand, however, it
659 took away with the other. Thus:

> *Art.* 35. The Catholic, apostolic, and Roman religion being that of all Haitians, is the religion of the state. It and its ministers will be protected.
>
> *Art.* 36. The law assigns to each minister of that religion the extent of his spiritual administration. These ministers may not, under any pretext, form a body within the state.
>
> *Art.* 37. If in the course of time other religions are introduced, no person shall be hindered, so long as he conforms to the laws, in following the cult he has chosen.

The Catholic, then, is the state religion, but only because the Haitians have heretofore been nominal Catholics. It occupies a position of practical fact which it would lose if by the introduction of other cults Haitians should be drawn away from it. Its ministers will be carefully watched to see that they do not, as a group, try to exert political pressure. And what freedom of action is possible to a church whose ecclesiastical parishes can be limited or extended in size by the civil legislature?

Pétion no more fought religion than he fought any other conventional institution approved by civilized people; but he did little to foster it. He received certain Wesleyan missionaries with considerable hospitality, remarking that "education increases the dignity of
[848] mankind." He appeased the good Catholics by repealing the law
concerning the rights of illegitimate children, substituting for it a
[871] more moderate French rule.[4] Likewise, he invited the Catholic
Church to participate in the education of Haitian youth.

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[848]
[878] [4] The French practice allowed an illegitimate child recognized before a wedding equal rights of inheritance with legitimate offspring, while giving only quarter rights to a child recognized after marriage.

Christophe had a great deal more to say about religion than any of 175
the other early Haitian rulers. In a speech following the promulga- 643
tion of his constitution, after severe censure of the government of 795
Dessalines, he said: 659

> It is necessary to raise again the dignity of religion, for weakened morals 642
> leave young people open to the licenses of their age. Liberty has been assailed by traitors, enemies of their fellow citizens, and sold to our cruelest enemies. It is assured to you now, have no doubt! Shortly you will see these vicious men and their criminal efforts vanish like clouds.
>
> Public education, after religion and liberty the most precious benefit [871]
> mankind enjoys, will be reanimated and sustained by morality; it will [586]
> again be held in honor and reverence amongst us. Divorce, that traitor among customs, is rigorously prohibited and proscribed forever.[5]

Like Pétion, Christophe made the Catholic Church official, but he indicated the dictatorial path he intended to follow by adding that "no ecclesiastical decree or law might become effective without the
consent of the President.[6] He completely overturned the law of [848]
Dessalines concerning illegitimate children; his decree deprived such offspring of any claims of inheritance whatever.[7] In a country where practically no one had been legally married such a ruling was severe, but Christophe hoped that his severity would force his subjects into wedlock, and this the Catholic Church was bound to approve.

Making the Church official did not strengthen its hold upon the 175
people. In 1814 (seven years after he had promised "to raise again 795
the dignity of religion") the kingdom was served by only three 793
priests, one of whom Christophe had named archbishop. The King 659
was preoccupied with form, and having created a nobility he needed 645
a church to lend dignity to his realm. Consequently in 1811 he reorganized the clergy in his kingdom, establishing an archiepiscopal see and three bishoprics. The reorganization, except for the archbishop, remained a paper plan because the Pope refused to coöperate by giving the schismatic church his approval.

All the early rulers seem to have been rather innocent in their dealings with Rome. They felt, apparently, that as heads of state they had but to express a desire in order to have His Holiness ap-

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[5] This speech, made on February 18, 1807, is cited in Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haiti* (Port-au-Prince, 1848), II, 354–355.

[6] See the law of March 18, 1807.

[7] Law of March 25, 1807.

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175 795 771 religion was never at a lower ebb in Haiti than toward the middle of the nineteenth century, as whole generations of citizens were growing up who had never known the proper forms of ritual, and had no real religious training. The outward shell of the Church covered steadily more "superstition," more homely beliefs and practices, and the long divorce from Rome permitted the growth of a native religion which later could not be eradicated, no matter how assiduous the labors of Catholic priests.

175 795 771 659 643 During Boyer's quarter-century the once Roman and Catholic Church remained the official religion of the state, but its head was now the President. Organization simplified as orthodoxy declined. By 1840 there was only one order of priesthood; no archbishop, bishops, canons, curés, or other titled dignitaries, but only "priests." The people were not taxed to maintain the state Church; there were no tithes or forced contributions for the support of public worship or the repair of parish churches, no heavy list of clergy living from levies on the people. However, if the Haitians were not burdened by imposed religious fees, they were still through their own fears subject to steady tolls for services by the degraded men who then called themselves priests.

175 795 793 Every effort of the state failing to provide proper religious leadership, Boyer resigned himself to permitting those who professed to be priests to practice in the republic. There were seventy so-called priests in the country in 1840. Some of them had once been in holy orders but were now unfrocked: they found in Haiti not only a haven but a fertile field for gain. In addition to these religious renegades came adventurers who knew just enough of ritual and theology to use the priestly garb as a cover for easy graft. Both groups encouraged crude superstition with a view to making money. They baptized houses, boats, and doorposts, and blessed fetish charms or amulets, all for a fee. Immorality was flagrant, and many of the "priests" had mistresses and children. The debauchery of some was so notorious that Secretary-Général Inginac had publicly to rebuke them and even to banish a few from the country. A visiting [114] Quaker, benignantly tolerant of most of what he saw in Haiti, was scandalized by the religious situation. He said that the sole aim of most of the clergy was to secure gold and silver "as quickly as they can, to send to Europe for investment." Excepting a very few (notably the priests at Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, and Jacmel), he

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The men seldom or never go to mass, except on the days particularly set 175
apart by the government as public fêtes. On these occasions the president 114
and all the officers of Hayti go in procession, but the idea of devotion, I 771
believe, never enters their contemplation. Such days are merely set aside 796
for celebrating some particular event, which it is wished should be handed
down to posterity. These occasions present only the external symbol of 184
religion, the whole people being either ignorant or careless of its real
character. Their manner and appearance during the celebration of the mass
shew that they have no inward feelings of piety or devotion.[13]

Catholicism in Haiti, then, had fallen on evil days; Protestantism, 175
on the other hand, was unable to gain any foothold. Boyer, indiffer- 795
ent to all religion, did not even care to tolerate Wesleyan mission-
aries as Pétion had done, for when certain of them arrived and were 797
met with "persecution and stoning by a mob," it required persuasion
to gain his assent to freeing those the police had taken into custody.
He forbade any further meetings of Wesleyans, on the ground that
they stirred up riots. At the close of Boyer's administration it was [162]
estimated that there were only about 1,200 Protestants in the coun-
try, mostly Methodists and Baptists, and these primarily Negroes
who had come from the United States to settle in the republic.

Although the Haitian government probably derived a certain 175
satisfaction from controlling a state Church, Boyer was impelled 795
both by circumstance and his own temperament to obtain the ap-
proval of the Holy See. His own tepid spiritual zeal had nothing to 648
do with the case; Haitian public order would benefit by a superior 659
group of priests, and Haitian prestige would rise, he thought, with 643 ●
recognition by Rome. Having already in 1826 settled the conflict between France and Haiti in the political sphere, Boyer tried assiduously to end the schism from Rome. His propositions were examined with benevolence by the Pope, who conferred upon the primate of the Indies, archbishop of Santo Domingo, the title of archbishop of Haiti. This personage, however, was a Spaniard already established in the comfortable city of Santo Domingo amidst people of his own nationality. He could not be persuaded to move to Port-au-Prince. The failure of Boyer's efforts is due more to this ecclesiastic than to uncoöperativeness on the part of Rome. From 1834 to 1860 the Court of Rome had official representatives in Haiti, but they cannot have been very effective men, for conditions in

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[13] James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 394–395.

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175 religious life were not improved and the schism endured. The arch-
795 bishop of Haiti seemed to regard his new title as applying vaguely to
648 the island, not the country, of Haiti, and since all his vicars were
659 Spaniards unable to speak either French or the Créole dialect, they
● 643 did nothing for religion in the Haitian republic.
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Ties broken by a single radical action may require endless patience and persistence to knit together their severed threads. The impetuosity of Dessalines caused the rupture; it was prolonged by indifference to religion, absorption in economic and political matters, fear that France might use to her profit any *rapprochement* with Rome, and a certain complacency in subordinating Church to state. Inertia, however, was the real obstacle in the way of healing the breach. It is much less trouble to let conditions remain as they are than to make a change whose results no one can foretell. But the longer the rupture, the less understanding the people had of steps necessary to reëstablish the Church.

175 When in 1847 Faustin Soulouque, the ignorant, became president,
771 the horizon had never seemed darker for organized religion. The black general, suddenly impelled by a quirk of fortune into high office, was a man of the people in his religious attitudes. All their belief in magic, in the mystical power of certain rites, in charms and spells—all their "superstition" as the Catholics called it—Soulouque shared. For the first time in Haitian history one is aware that the folk beliefs brought over from Africa had become welded into a recognizable form, under the name of Vodun. To colonial writers "Vaudoux" had been primarily a name for certain dances; to the early Haitian élite it seems to have connoted either occult rites or vulgar claptrap compounded of gibberish, old wives' remedies, and sensual dances. But in the long and deepening twilight of Catholicism, the various elements were fused, until by Soulouque's time the Haitian was familiar with the general beliefs, rites, and "priesthood" of Vodun. As Soulouque had broken with the tradition of presidents who wished Haiti to be recognized as one of the community of civilized Western nations, so he allowed the traditional respect for Catholicism to die. As an emperor he was a transplanted African chief; as a believer he was a follower of Vodun. The rites were practiced and the sacrifices made openly now. Men in high places dared to reveal their belief in native tenets. For twelve years Vodun flourished with official approval.

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The depths to which Haiti descended under Soulouque made the task of his successor relatively simple. It would prove wise and generally popular to reverse the Emperor's action, in whatever respect. President Geffrard was the more successful as an antidote to the Emperor because of his practical intelligence. The best time to strike for the revival of Catholicism would be immediately after the heyday of Vodun. In 1859, the first year of his incumbency, Geffrard consequently undertook negotiations with the Holy See, sending two plenipotentiaries for the discussions. Because the Haitian delegates persuasively depicted the sorry state of religion in their country, because they showed themselves and their President willing to defer to papal wishes, and because the new Pope was filled with missionary zeal to reclaim Haiti for the Faith, all problems were overcome. An early agreement was reached, and the Concordat, signed in Rome on March 28, 1860, was approved by the Haitian Senate on the first of April. A commission was dispatched to Haiti immediately, one which did thoroughly and well its task of delimiting the boundaries of dioceses, allocating bishops and other clergy, and founding a seminary. An archbishop of Port-au-Prince was consecrated, and the Catholic Church, Roman and apostolic, at long last became officially established once more in the republic. The breach of fifty-five years was healed.

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In one sense the reform had come too late. All the peasants were by this time thoroughly imbued with the ideas of Vodun, as were the lower orders in the towns. Most of the élite either clandestinely practiced Vodun or ignored religion altogether. On the other hand, practically no Haitian was opposed to Catholicism, not even the most ardent devotee of the obscurer cult. The native faith had grown up quietly enough, making its adjustments to the outward forms of Catholicism which still existed in the country. To every Vodun worshiper there were simply two hierarchies of spiritual beings, each with its own powers; to believe in one was not to deny the other. The new Catholic priests, then, met no hostility; what they had to deal with was an ineradicable folk religion which accepted everything and rejected little in the spiritual realm.

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The Archbishop, his band of forty priests, and a small group of Brothers and Sisters set to work with fervor. Nearly everything had to be rebuilt from the ground. Church buildings were in such disrepair that it was considered more economical to erect new ones than

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Vodun, then, was both widespread and powerful enough to be 175
turned to most effective ends in 1791. Contemporary accounts of it 771
still saw it as a meeting ground of superstitions. The French naturalist, 114
Descourtilz, for example, was primarily struck by the use of the [781]
occult in connection with Vodun; he especially describes a woman
who, under the seizure of her god, took a live coal in her hand [789]
without being burnt; a husband who by the use of magic struck his inconstant wife with a languorous malady, effective for half a year; and the knowledge of poison which was combined with the practice of magic. He mentions but one of the Vodun gods by name but implies the existence of many others.[10]

Madiou, Haiti's first historian, likewise always spoke of Vodun as 114
a savage survival; he says of a native general, "Lamour Dérance, 771
plunged in gross errors, put his faith in *sorcery*, in the prophecy of 781
papas, or priests of *African fetishism*."[11] In his scornful distaste for the vulgar he clearly indicated by his own italics some conspicuous elements of the developing religion: magic, the use of fetishes, and a Vodun priesthood. His illustration of Dérance's error was his making soldiers believe that bullets could not wound them:

> When he marched to combat he was preceded by bands of Congos, Aradas, Ibos, Nabos, Mandingues, Haoussas, who threw themselves against the French battalions with a prodigious intrepidity, crying that the bullets were but dust. But this courage which *superstition* fed was shattered against the ramparts of . . . the Europeans' square formations.

It is noteworthy that the first three black rulers set themselves 175
against Vodun because of its potentialities for sedition. The plots to 643
overthrow the old régime had come to fruition at apparently inno- 796
cent Vodun dances. Although the ingenuous aspect of the dance 671
gathering had deceived the white masters, Toussaint, Dessalines, and 659
Christophe knew the meaning of the assemblies. All three had to 669
drive their people hard and knew that resentment would be an 794
inevitable consequence; it must not have an opportunity to burgeon 798
at nightly gatherings. Toussaint was the strictest of the three, for he ~~800~~
forbade all dances and nocturnal assemblage.[12] The other two singled

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[10] M. E. Descourtilz, *Voyages d'un naturaliste en Haïti, 1799–1803* (Paris, 1935 ed.), pp. 116–118.

[11] Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, p. 33.

[12] In an order of January 4, 1800.

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The other two singled

175 out Vodun dances for their bans, permitting the purely social dances.
643 On the eve of the first anniversary of independence, "as soon as
794 retreat was sounded, African dances of all kinds began in the tents
796 and open fields; the Vaudoux dance alone was proscribed; the noise
671 of the drums did not quiet down until morning."[13] Dessalines was
659 more suspicious of Vodun than the other two for, being a supersti-
798 tious man himself, he feared that some of his growing number of
771 enemies might use sorcery upon him; consequently whenever his
active police reported meetings of Vodun worshipers he had the
offenders shot if they could be caught. Practically all Haitians knew
how to distinguish the rhythms of Vodun drumbeats from those of
other dances, so that it was not particularly difficult to track down the
meeting places. What Christophe really believed, no one could say.
He paid outward homage to Roman Catholicism, of course, but
rumor persisted of his great faith in magic and the power of African
fetishes.[14]

175 The élite mulatto presidents, Pétion and Boyer, did not deign to
643 dignify Vodun by prohibiting it. No revelation of their attitude
794 toward it survives, but we may note that no law of their thirty-six-
659 year tenure of the presidency mentions it. From their other opinions
798 one concludes that they regarded it as merely another of the people's
796 innocent and harmless aberrations. Not one of the foreigners whose
771 curiosity about the Negro republic led them to report on Haitian
114 life of this period gives an intelligent account of Vodun as it then
was. Macaulay, writing in 1831, for example, describes the annual
celebration at the source of Grande Rivière de l'Artibonite; he mentions the festive dances (not Vodun) and singing, then says: "Morning ceremonies consisted of a solemn sacrifice at which the blood of victims immolated for the feast were offered, and libations of wine were poured on the spring."[15] This was clearly a Vodun sacrifice. Brown, in 1837, writes as a religious man:

> No race is, more than the African, given to religious feelings, though these being but mere sensations entirely independent of thought and reason, manifest themselves in a display of idle fooleries, or dark and hideous terrors of the imagination. They intermix the legitimate ritual of the Catholic faith with the mysterious adoration paid to their national Fetishes, and the

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13. Madiou, *op. cit.*, III, 186.
14. See Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti*, pp. 90–91.
15. Zachary Macaulay, *Haïti* (Paris, 1835), pp. 90–91.

themselves and their families economically and socially. Property 175
was important, so they took pains to insure the legitimacy of their 565
heirs; color was crucial, and so they regulated the marriages of their 581
children to be sure there was no reversion to the black strain. They
guarded their fortunes solicitously, provided their daughters with
dowries large enough sometimes even to lure a white husband,
educated their sons in Paris—behaved, in short, as if they had been
pillars of society in provincial France. Like the white planters, the
male affranchis often had relations with slave women, but even more
rarely than whites were they seduced into marriage with women of
the lower orders.

When the slave insurrection and its aftermath freed the half- 175
million blacks in Saint-Domingue it was not to be expected that 581
European middle-class morals and practices should suddenly prevail.
Modern usage emerges from the womb of tradition. Neither in
Africa nor in the colony had tradition taught the blacks respect for
monogamy or for marriage entered into by religious ceremony. If [583]
the ex-slaves had reverted to their Dahomean, Congolese, or other
African background, they might have introduced the bride price;
but to pay a bride price is to assume the existence of wealth, an
assumption contrary to fact among the ex-slaves in Saint-Domingue
of the 1790's, and Haiti of the 1800's. In neither Dahomey nor the [585]
Congo was there much ceremony at the union of a couple; what
there was consisted mostly of singing and dancing. If, on the other
hand, the people went only by what they had observed in slave days,
there was no tradition of binding union or strict codes, as we understand them. A man knew when to stay away from another man's [837]
woman; children remained near their mother—these two statements [855]
almost cover the situation as of 1796 among the newly freed slaves.

Toussaint, apparently a conventional person in what concerned 175
social behavior, wished his people to be "moral." He instituted a 643
time of "holy masses, mystic communions, biblical psalms, and
divine ecstasies"[2] for his private edification, and recommended the 788
same for his people. He could not possibly have instilled into them a 582
desire for Christian marriage, however; even if he could, priests
would not have been available for the wholesale marrying of scores
of thousands of men and women. Local records of weddings at this
period are very scanty.

[2] Saint-Rémy, *Pétion et Haïti*, III, 92.

The truth is, marriage and moral conditions differ from economic
and political conditions in that they are not so immediate and pressing
in their effect upon individual lives. If these are not attended to
today, tomorrow will find our bellies empty and our state overrun
by enemies. But sex relations go on willy-nilly, and children are born
into families: there will still be marriage and a moral problem to
175 attend to when order has been brought into practical affairs. Toussaint
643 was involved in a diplomatic battle in which the participants
were the best minds of France, England, and the United States.
648 Beside these mighty problems upon which depended the economic
and political future of his people, the question of a standard of sex
831 conduct was definitely secondary.

So it must have seemed to Dessalines, the founder of the state and
175 first "law-giver" of Haiti. By his official actions it is evident that the
643 economy of the country was his primary concern, with defense
831 against a return of the French a close second. In his pronouncements
he bowed respectfully to religion and then postponed action until
some more convenient season. He pronounced likewise some very
proper sentiments on marriage and morals, calling attention to the
benefits of wedlock, piously deprecating sensuality and voluptuousness.
[582] His imperial constitution of 1805 encouraged lawful unions,
treating marriage as a socially virtuous state to be cultivated.

This was all words, however, and came strangely from the black
175 general who was, as everyone knew, a notorious libertine. He lectured
643 his people on the danger of yielding to their passions, yet
159 showed no intention of controlling his own impulses or those of his
831 favorites. He was, indeed, the last man in Haiti to make a gesture
toward sexual morality among the people, for although he was
married his daily life was a complete negation of moral precept. In
every town he habitually visited he established mistresses, bestowing
large sums of money upon them. He employed every sort of seduction,
honor, and gift to conquer the virtue of females who valued
their "respectability." Actually, he did not often need to use violence,
for the prevailing moral tone was not so high but that most young
and attractive women would yield to their Emperor.

114 The sternly upright Haitian historian, Madiou, has a formidable
643 paragraph on the vices of Dessalines. He tries partially to excuse him
159 on the grounds of his fury at discovering conspiracies against his
authority among his colored lieutenants, asserting that his early gen-
831

erosity and equity now gave way to malevolence and personal license: 114

> Putting no restraint upon his passions, he travelled about, followed by 643
> actors, dancers, musicians, and courtesans. An indefatigable dancer, as soon 159
> as he arrived in a place he gave a ball. Under Toussaint Louverture, in 831
> order to please the Governor-General everyone approached the holy altar; under Dessalines one gained glory by dancing well. The Emperor, giving himself up to scandalous pleasures, forgot that he was head of the state. The greatest immorality reigned about him. With a gaiety sometimes grotesque, he told the ladies who frequented his court how much he admired their beauty, no matter how ugly they actually were. Following his example, his major officers of state kept concubines in every town in the empire. . . . When the emperor entered a town, the honest women were gravely disturbed, for their virtue was menaced not only by him but also by his officers of state. Many mothers kept their daughters shut up to keep them from the notice of those who were powerful enough to take them, with impunity, by violence.[3]

Marriage, then, looked at from the standards of any white Western 175
country, was in a sorry state in Haiti. Continued warfare had broken 831
up many even of the families which, though unrecognized by the 581
white planters, had nevertheless been formed during slavery; and the camp life of soldiers roaming the countryside confirmed the casual attitude of the people toward sex. Every ex-slave was a hero, and liberty was sweet. Under Dessalines it was scarcely wise for a prominent man to marry an attractive wife, the Emperor might so soon set himself to seduce her. Above all, there was no tradition of formal marriage. This was the chief factor to bear upon future marriage and sexual customs of the Haitians; and in appraising them is the paramount fact to keep in mind.

Meanwhile, children were being born. Their mothers were 175
known, but often the fathers were not, for the vast majority of 848
infants were born out of wedlock. Dessalines, a realist except in 428
matters which touched his vanity, saw the necessity of establishing a status for these children, not on grounds of morality but for economic expediency, to avoid future disputes over inheritance. French precedent did not serve his need, for according to French law an illegitimate child may not inherit; a parent in France is not free to leave his property as he will, but must pass it on to his legitimate heirs.

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[3] Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 239.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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must pass to an illegitimate child if recognition is accorded. It is 175
likewise strong in its harmony with actual conditions: in the absence 671
of legal marriage among the people, it would have been manifestly 848
unfair to favor a few fortunate children. Dessalines argued that the 428
revolution had legitimized all Haitians; that it was unjust to prevent
a child's inheriting from the person who had given him life; and that
since all Haitians had come out of slavery and degradation into
freedom, no new inequalities should be instituted.[4]

If this law encouraged family life, it weakened marriage both of 175
the civil and religious kind: where was the sense in the expensive 581
luxury of a wedding when children were just as legitimate without
it? By conforming to folk practice the Emperor confirmed it. Only 671
the aristocrats disliked his law, for it seemed to make light of one of 565
the distinctions they cherished—the formal wedding. It irked them
to have the State place a casual child upon an equal plane with one
born after proper marriage.

At still another point the law accorded with living conditions at 175
the time. During the years of fighting many men had been killed, 593
and always the large standing army kept thousands of others away 671
from settled farm life. Home, then, was for a child the abode of his
mother—a fact recognized by the law's insistence upon maternal
relationship rather than paternity. Such a word as "matriarchate"
has no place here; but from the days of Dessalines to modern times,
the lowly Haitian thinks of his home primarily as where his mother
lives.

As if the advantages of formal wedding were not already suffi- 175
ciently weakened by this law, other enactments of the empire struck
at other phases of marriage. Divorce was permitted for adultery, for 671
incompatibility of temperament or character, and by mutual con- 586
sent. Such provisions not only broke away completely from Catholic
practice, but made getting out of wedlock a casual matter of taking
an oath. The complaint of incompatibility need be made by only one
spouse; "mutual consent" as a ground for divorce was probably not
allowed in 1805 in any other country of the Western World.

Dessalines did not appear to care one whit for the good opinion 175
of white foreigners. It sufficed for him if Haiti endured, whatever 643
Europeans thought of her. Christophe, on the other hand, was ex- 648
tremely sensitive to foreign disapproval. Many of his official acts can

[4] According to the testimony of Madiou, op. cit., III, 216.

643 be explained only as efforts to win outside respect for his kingdom of
648 blacks. He was aware of the scorn in which white people held the
apparent absence of all sexual morality in Haiti, and so set about introducing reforms. Even as a general he had opposed the dissoluteness of Dessalines.

175 In an early pronouncement Christophe proscribes concubinage
643 (by which he meant the unmarried unions of the people), libertinage,
582 and "all those disorders which weaken the family." To proscribe an
671 evil is not necessarily to put an end to it, however, and so he tried
581 also to persuade and educate his people to the habit of full legal
[595] marriage. His steps at persuasion were various. In speeches he urged
weddings upon his subjects; yet a man could see little reason for tying himself to one woman for life, assuming *legal* responsibilities at an expense, when already from experience he knew that he could have a woman's loyalty without the ceremony. Although weddings somewhat increased after 1806, Christophe's verbal campaign was a failure. He next tried force. In one town he made all the females assemble in the public square; then, separating the married from the unmarried, commanded his royal guards to advance, each to select an unmarried woman who should become his wife. At other times he selected young men and women by lot and had them married "by their King's authority." No nobleman in the kingdom could long remain unwed: indeed, Queen Victoria might have approved Christophe's solicitude for the moral uprightness of the Haitian court.

175 Another means by which Christophe forced his people into formal
671 marriage was the indirect one of attacking property rights. Realizing
848 that Dessalines' law by guaranteeing inheritance to natural children
428 encouraged people to remain unmarried, he rescinded it by one
of the first acts of his rule.[5] This act reëstablished French practice, making it all but impossible for illegitimate children to inherit anything. Most persons of property found this law persuasive where words had left them cold. Madiou thought the law "excessively severe in a country where nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand of the population were born out of wedlock,"[6] and he spoke of its disharmony with general practice at the time. Actually,

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[5] Law of March 25, 1807.

[6] Madiou, *op. cit.*, III, 411.

it seems not radically to have affected the masses but only the fairly well-to-do,

175 family and to make only "sensible" marriages, was a fact rarely
581 glimpsed by the critics. A good example of their attitude is the statement
588 of the pious English Quaker, John Candler, in 1842:

> [114] But few of the merchants or principal inhabitants are married men: concubinage is common, and unhappily, regarded as not dishonorable. Whenever a ball is given, or a large party invited, the invitation is equally extended to "Monsieur and Madame ——" or to "Monsieur —— and his lady"; and by this compounding of moral distinctions among the upper classes, the evil descends to the lower ranks and becomes perpetuated.[3]

[867] And later Candler accuses Haitian mothers of being "utterly dead to all moral considerations," because they do not take pains to instill (middle-class English) ideals of morality, or teach the young the evils of "wayward passion."

175 Not even Haitian authors were willing to accept plaçage as a
114 desirable practice. Beaubrun Ardouin explained that the color prejudice
581 of colonial times was responsible for what he clearly considered
581 an evil.[4] "The aristocracy of skin" made plaçage prevail over "divine
588 law," for whites would not often in colonial times marry colored
563 women. The same prejudice in the republic kept light-colored men from marrying darker women, but not from living with them. Ardouin believed that Haiti would gain infinitely by adopting "*les bonnes moeurs,*" not on moral grounds, but for practical reasons. With regular marriage, he says, there would result a greater fixity of the conjugal state and more confidence on the part of the women, "who too often discover that they are only the satisfaction of a whim"; also the men would reflect more upon the consequence of an infidelity which, in dividing families, might separate children from father or mother and so greatly weaken the delicate relations of paternal love and filial piety. Still another consideration was political: the dispersion which resulted in the inheritance of property when many mothers and children compete. Because of plaçage unions, quite a number of estates had been reduced to almost nothing.

175 As the century progressed, the custom of plaçage prevailed from
581 the President down to the humblest peasant. The women of the
588 President were visited publicly by him; sometimes he was accom-
643 panied on his visits by a staff or selected officers of state. The critical

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[3] *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 24, 25.

[4] *La Géographie de l'Ile d'Haïti*, pp. 181, 96 ff.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966

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175 581 588 ● 643 Englishman, Sir Spenser St. John, said that he had met placées of the President at dinner, and was asked to trace resemblances between children and their reported father. "No one seeks to conceal it, and the conversation of married ladies continually turns on this subject. One excuse for it is that many of the ladies whom you meet in society were only married after the birth of their first children. However, according to French law, that ceremony renders them all legitimate. Some of those admitted into society are not married at all, but their daughters being married, prevents notice being taken of the false position of the mother."[5]

565 581 In recent years the élite, although many continue to contract plaçage unions, keep these arrangements quieter than formerly and tend to make them with women lower in the social scale than themselves. Formal and regular marriage is expected and approved among the upper classes of today. Indeed, one modern informant in answer to the question, "What is the primary test of membership among the élite?" replied without hesitation, "Five generations of marriage in the family."[6]

583 565 Formal marriage is not entered into lightly among the upper classes. It is a serious business watched over by state, family, and church. The interest of the state seems to be to guard against bigamy. The possibility of bigamy is the more likely since one or the other contracting party may have formerly lived in plaçage. The interest of the family is in the wisdom of the alliance. Before a wedding can be performed both parties must have obtained the formal consent of their parents, besides having their banns published at their respective places of permanent residence. There seems to be some doubt whether the courts would uphold a father in his refusal to consent to the marriage of a son over twenty-one years old; but cases are known in which such a refusal has stopped the wedding. Of course, the daughters must always obtain parental consent to marry.

585 The civil wedding, adopted in Haiti at the beginning of her independence, is usually followed by a religious ceremony. The Church, like the State, takes precautions against clandestine marriages and bigamy. Notice of a projected union must be read from the pulpit

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[5] *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, I, 177–178.

[114] [581] [554] [6] John Lobb, in "Caste and Class in Haiti" (*American Journal of Sociology*, XLVI, No. 1 [July, 1940], 29), states that "one informant defined family status as a position resulting from the recognition that in a family the parents had, for generations, been legally married in the church."

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175 178 64 slave system are not likely to assume it again; and the aristocrats, ever intent upon forgetting their African forebears, would certainly not turn to the Dark Continent for political inspiration.

175 642 701 ● 643 Although the revolution had brought to the fore men of military experience and even genius, it had driven out or killed every single person of experience in civil government. The affranchis of the old régime had been denied political rights long before 1791; by 1804 few could have had any memory of active participation in government.[1] Toussaint was dead. The only authority of any significance was military. Consequently the new state was built upon army control and directed by army officers. Dessalines as commander in chief took the title of governor-general, later of emperor, but was in reality a military ruler. Fearful as he was of a new French invasion, he set his generals over the districts, organized his people as an army ready for immediate mobilization, and ruled as dictator.

175 642 This was all the Haitians had as political background: a military dictatorship. The Founding Fathers of Haiti, if so they might be called, had almost nothing to work with, nothing to build upon: neither a Magna Carta of the Blacks, nor any precedent of an independent Negro state anywhere in this white man's world; neither heritage of local responsibility and political debate to sow the seeds of democracy, nor any example of self-government in the American tropics to offer a pattern[2]—many of the known forms of government were a practical impossibility for the Haitians because of their need of continued defense against foreign enemies, their slave heritage, their inexperience in self-government, their complete lack of a middle class.

175 668 Hardly one tenth of the people in any case was capable of giving detailed thought to the form which government should take. The mass of ex-slaves had been fighting only *against* slavery, against the hated white rulers, not *for* democracy or any other abstraction. Their freedom achieved, they would not be the ones to make decisions. [642] All political choices would be made by the generals, by men of property and position, by the few whose persistent ambition made them stand out from the masses.

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[1] Such participation in French colonial politics would have been before the restrictive laws of 1771.

[2] It must be recalled that Haiti was the second free country to be established in the Western Hemisphere, and that Liberia, in Africa, was still far in the future.

175 643 Immediately a division of political opinion was evident, one which was to persist throughout the century. No one denied the inevitability in 1804 of making Dessalines the head of state: he was the victorious commander, clearly the most powerful man in Haiti. The division of opinion arose over the manner in which he should rule, whether as military dictator, or as a responsible president. Dessalines settled the matter peremptorily—if only for the time being—by asserting himself as a dictator.

175 642 [663] The issue did not die with his decision, however, for it had deep roots. Supporting Dessalines wholeheartedly was the group of generals who were all Negroes, all ex-slaves, all practically illiterate. The three most influential of these blacks were Christophe, later to succeed his general; Charlette, and Boisrond-Tonnère. Those who preferred a government in which the president shared power with a legislature of important men were, on the contrary, almost all affranchis of the old régime, therefore the most cultured and educated men in the country. Most of them were mulattoes or at least of a lighter complexion than the Negroes, although of course some blacks adhered to their position. The leaders of this group were Pétion, Boyer, Inginac, and Gérin. This division of opinion went back even into the decade preceding independence, when the island, free of slavery, was still technically under the rule of France, and the ex-slave Toussaint had to fight and conquer the mulatto leader Rigaud before he could establish his rule as dictator.

175 643 642 66 For a brief moment after independence, all differences were reconciled, since all had been united in a common cause against the enemy. Dessalines was then commanding in the Artibonite Valley, and Christophe in the North; two of Rigaud's former lieutenants, Pétion and Geffrard, commanded in the West and South. Apparently there was genuine respect among these men for each other. Dessalines, for example, with evident sincerity calls his colleague Pétion "that man of upright heart." The unity was short-lived, however. Not only was it evident that Dessalines meant to rule like an African despot-chief, taking advice only when he liked it; it was even more plain that through his cruelty, impetuosity, and crudeness he was bent on isolating Haiti from all contacts with the culture and polish of the outer world. Pétion and his group looked on with pained disgust as he indulged his violence against the whites who had hopefully remained in the country; the general's bloody procession throughout

175 the land, leaving a trail of misery and death, was an augury of what
643 to expect from a tyrant. They opposed his plan to destroy all coastal
642 towns and move the people inland where, protected by their moun-
tains, they would be immune to foreign attack and foreign ideas.
66 They resented their loss of property by state expropriation, and could
not fail to be shocked by the grim exultation of Boisrond-Tonnère:
"To draw up the act of independence, we used the skin of a white
man for parchment, his skull for an inkstand, his blood for ink, and
a bayonet for pen!"[3]

Even without such cogent objections to Dessalines the mulattoes would have opposed his dictatorship, for as intellectuals and as social élite they wanted a real share in the government. For this they had agitated since before 1791, and it would be a grim irony if after fourteen years of intermittent conflict the successful expulsion of whites should be followed by a continued exclusion of mulattoes from the government. It would be a worse irony to throw off the white yoke only to take on a black one. When in 1805 Dessalines made himself emperor they asked for the creation of a nobility, thinking to share the rule with him; but the Emperor's curt "*Moi seul je suis noble*" dashed this hope. Although detailed proof is lacking, it is generally accepted in Haiti that the conspiracies against the Emperor's life began with this intransigent statement.

Here, then, was the issue which in half a dozen varying forms was to split political opinion for decades: rule by a single tyrant vs. rule by the cultured class. It even made two nations of one between the years 1806 and 1820.

When Dessalines was assassinated, a Constituent Assembly was
175 summoned to draw up a new constitution and select a new ruler.
642 The mulattoes were in control of the Assembly which under Pétion's
skilful guidance sat at the mulatto stronghold, Port-au-Prince, and
there drew up a constitution assuring the limitation of the president's
power by a Senate, and requiring election and reëlection of the
[66] president instead of permitting him life tenure. This achieved, the
Assembly dutifully elected the black general Christophe president of
Haiti. However, belonging as he did to Dessalines' school of thought
—unrestricted rule by a strong man—he indignantly refused to be
bound by such a constitution; when the Assembly, instead of yielding

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[3] This statement is cited, with evident distaste, by Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 114.

to his demands for revision and for his selection as president for life, 175
retained the constitution they had written and chose Pétion president 642
in his stead, the rupture was instant and complete. [667]

Dictator as against restricted president, strong man as against class
or group rule, Negro against mulatto, army against civil govern- 175
ment, executive against legislature, North against South—these are 665
the phases of the subsequent dichotomy in Haitian politics.

A good case can easily be made for the advocates of force in
Haitian government, particularly in its early days. For years the 175
majority of men had lost the habit of steady work on the land; a 642
strong hand was needed to reëstablish in the countryside that eco- 433
nomic order without which liberty shrivels. The people had become
accustomed to taking orders from their military leaders, and these 656
from their commanding officer. Those, moreover, were times of crisis, when France might suddenly descend again upon her former colony: few crises can be dealt with by debating societies. Looking back on the course of Haitian history, one may point out also that the country prospered under the dictatorships of Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe as it never did under the limited presidencies.[4]

In 1806, therefore, the aristocratic party got its wish, although only 175
at the price of splitting the country in two. They established a 642
government with a president of their own and a Senate filled with
their representatives. The earliest legislation naturally enough fav- 665
ored their own landholding group. When prosperity did not result, 646
Pétion began to recommend to the Senate a division of the land. 643
More and more, although the representative form was preserved, Pétion ruled as a dictator. He was mild enough not to arouse antagonism; as is always the case when freedom of speech is curbed and summary legislation required, the plea of crisis was used to justify extraordinary measures.

The legislative party was firmly in the saddle by 1820 when Boyer 175
reunited North and South, and shared his power with the Senate. 642
643

[4] The argument for dictatorship is familiar to the modern world. A defense of "totalitarianism," published in 1816 by authority of Christophe (then King Henry I), is amusingly like certain European utterances of the nineteen-thirties: "The King has the sweet satisfaction of seeing that the cultivators [who were forced to work on the land whether they wanted to or not], being everywhere regularly paid [though the sum might be tiny], are praising the freedom they enjoy." And again: "Hayti chose a kingdom in order to shun forever that chaos, that confusion and perpetual clashing, which result from those monstrous associations known under the name of *popular bodies*." Anon., *Haytian Papers* (1816), pp. 109, 113. [829]

175 Since he was president for twenty-five years (normal ones, as things
642 go in Haiti), it is worth while to examine the functioning of the
643 kind of government the upper class favored.

President Boyer's education and outlook were wholly French. He
175 had formed his views of government principally upon French
642 models, yet when he became head of state he could not forget his
643 own military career. He said repeatedly that he wished to supersede
692 the military by the civil power, but somehow never got around to it. The country was full of black generals, and it would have been difficult to retire them, primarily because they were black. He established courts to insure the rights of man, but since his newborn judiciary lacked the prestige to command respect, interpretation of the law came from the President—until before long he was himself the law. With a logic characteristic of the French, he tried to make the whole administration of the country orderly and tidy by codifying laws, laying out spheres of governmental departments, and properly ticketing matters in general. He had to be the sole judge of the intention and operation of statutes, however, and if necessary modify the nature of an act to suit his view of the public need. His honest and generally upright character perhaps made his enormous prerogatives conducive to the public good; but Boyer was a dictator in spite of his Senate, since when he found a law working badly he simply turned it from its normal course and gave it a quite contrary effect.

[646] As the years of his long rule proceeded, he took more power to
himself. When his Senate would not pass bills as he proposed them,
[661] he waited until they adjourned and then either neglected to execute their laws, or instructed the government printing office to change the wording. He clearly regarded the legislature as a necessary nuisance, to be kept as a sop to the élite and to preserve the appearance of republicanism before the world. Representatives from the various communes were recommended by the President, his nomination amounting almost always to election.[5]

600 Boyer was overthrown by the Revolution of 1843, by all odds the

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[643] [5] The task of governing the whole island was obviously heavier than governing a fraction of it, so Boyer may have felt justified in his departures from strict constitutionality. He was always an indefatigable worker, whose intentions were uniformly laudable. He tried to rule alone, as had his illustrious predecessors. The hitch came because he was not of their calibre. He was worthy, virtuous—and mediocre. He would probably have made an excellent mayor of a French provincial town.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966 ?

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Boyer was overthrown by the Revolution of 1843, by all odds the

most important of Haitian upheavals. Since its effects were to be felt 175
for the next seventy years in the extinction of representative govern- 669
ment and the eclipse of the élite as political rulers, it is worthy of special attention. Paradoxically, it was a revolution fomented by the élite themselves. Its background and outcome reveal the power in word, and the impotence in deed, of this group by 1843.

The constitution of 1816, devised by Pétion's henchmen, had 175
granted the president initiative in all laws except those concerning 642
taxation. After the agreement of 1825 with France,[6] however, Boyer, 643
hard pressed by the need of paying the indemnity each year, began 652
to restrict the number of officials, diminish their salaries, and veto all 661
projects favorable to the development of public instruction and improvement which might cause further expenditure. By temperament he was an autocrat.[7] Every valuable measure must come from him alone; whatever another person proposed he would find a thousand reasons to discard. Sarcastic and vain, he did not know how to smooth ruffled feelings or make conflicting groups reconcile their differences. His personal weaknesses of character alienated the sympathies of many once-devoted officials.

During his long presidency Boyer also systematically ignored the 175
younger generation, men who admired the efforts of Pétion, ardent 643
reformers who wished to devote their energies to the improvement 665
of Haiti. The military career had no attraction for them: the higher ranks, alone bringing sufficient salary for a congenial way of life, were too few and one could achieve them only with difficulty, for since 1825 advancement had been submitted to rigorous rules. On the other hand, the paths of administration were severely guarded by those admirable great functionaries left over from the government of Pétion—men like Inginac and Imbert. But age had slowed their activity, and still Boyer kept them on. The younger generation mocked this "gerontocracy" and supported the parliamentary opposition.

The youth of the élite class continued to go to France for their 175
education, returning to Haiti to take part in the lively political dis- 665
cussions which made one of their chief occupations. During the first 871
decade of Boyer's administration they generally supported him, for 664

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[6] By which France recognized the independence of Haiti in return for the payment of a large annual indemnity.

[7] "In everything, he wishes to dominate," Pétion had said of him.

175 he seemed to be leading the country to progressive action; about
665 1830, however, a group better educated and more ambitious than
664 their predecessors arose. Nourished on ideas acquired in France, they
871 were shocked on their return by the miseries and governmental
inaction which prevailed in Haiti. True, when Boyer pressed them to suggest constructive measures of reform they had little to suggest. Like many other critics they were better at tearing down than at building up.

175 By the constitution of 1816 they had the right of free speech and
642 press, and made use of it to publish journals of criticism—*Le Phare*,
204 *Le Télégraphe*, *La Feuille de Commerce*. Their sustained criticism kept
208 alive the parliamentary opposition and gave it a focus; they were at
665 least partially responsible for the Revolution of 1843. In spite of their
diatribes, Boyer did not suppress these newspapers. If he had done so it is possible the Revolution might have come sooner. Not every dictator-president would permit such boldness as the following paragraph which appeared in 1843 in *Le Patriote*, an adversary of Boyer's own journal *Le Temps*:

> Let one look well at the things which are happening among us and then say whether, considering our first steps along the path, our progress has not been constantly slowed up now for some time, and whether this does not lead to a state of things in our country in which the most vital part of our civilization is struck by an immobility, almost a paralysis. Haiti is stationary, is retrograde: we need no other proof of it than this frightful uncertainty about the future which so deeply disturbs all serious minds and sincere patriots.

175 In 1838 Hérard Dumesle, president of the Chamber and a leader of
665 the opposition, drew up and secured the passage of an "Address to
646 the President of the Republic," which expressed certain just ideas of
643 progress and pointed out that failure to achieve it was due to the
664 mistakes of the administration. It was a bitterly critical and sometimes passionate document. Boyer was intensely angry and proceeded to violate the constitution: relying on the majority always at his disposal in the Chamber, he excluded from among the deputies those most hostile to his government.[8] But at the election of 1842 the communes of Les Cayes, Aquin, and Jérémie reëlected the expelled representatives, so confirming their criticism of the President.

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[8] Hérard Dumesle, Lochard, Lartigue, and David Saint-Preux.

When the Chamber of 1842 assembled Boyer once more forced 175
the elimination of these men and several of their political friends.[9] 643
The majority in the Chamber was so agitated over this expulsion 665
that only twenty-eight out of seventy-two deputies thereafter ap- 646
peared at any session. A dozen communes, among them the most important in the country (Port-au-Prince, Les Cayes, Gonaïves, Santo Domingo), had no representation. The deputies of the South avenged themselves by instituting a series of "patriotic banquets." At the plantations of adversaries of the government dinners were given for dozens of guests; the meals were followed by vibrant speeches, full of criticisms of the government. Thanks to the talent of these orators, the opposition likewise gradually filtered its way into the mass of the people, slowly but implacably undermining Boyer's government.

The President also had bad luck to contend with. During his 175
presidency many catastrophies saddened the country. The arsenal 731
blew up in 1827, burning the state warehouses and causing a loss of 5,000,000 piastres. A cyclone in 1831 desolated the South. Fires in 1832 and 1843 practically wiped out Port-au-Prince. An earthquake in 1842 shook the whole island, destroyed Santiago and Port-de-Paix, and transformed Cap-Haïtien into a mass of ruins; the fire which broke out in consequence was accompanied by pillaging
which went on for several days. The parliamentary opposition to [664]
Boyer made use of these natural calamities to sharpen displeasure at the government.

In August, 1842, a secret association, The Society of the Rights of 175
Man and of Citizen, was formed at Les Cayes to exploit this discon- 668
tent and prepare the fall of Boyer. It circulated clandestinely throughout the South the ringing Manifesto by Praslin, a résumé of the charges of the opposition which was soon covered with signatures. When adherents of the society were numerous enough, an executive committee was formed with the commandant Rivière Hérard as
president. At the end of January, 1843, an uprising occurred on the 175
Praslin plantation.[10] General Borgella, head of the department of the 669
South, proved irresolute; the insurrection, fostered by this indecision, spread rapidly among the troops, even generals joining in. By Febru-

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[9] The most important of the excluded deputies were Dumai Lespinasse, Covin Aîné, Dominique, Benoît, Ponthieux, Dumainville Dumont.

[10] At Torbeck, in the department of the South.

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669 ary, 1843, Boyer realized that it was futile to oppose the revolution-
● [643] aries and departed for exile, going by way of Jamaica to Paris.

[159] Now came the test of the revolutionary leaders.[11] The state was in
their hands; their own representative, Rivière Hérard, was the new
175 president. They proceeded to concoct a ridiculously naïve constitu-
642 tion which by granting a popular vote alienated large bodies of their
648 mulatto support; to insult the black army leaders; and to allow the
669 defeat of Haitian forces by Dominican revolutionaries, thus losing
two thirds of the island's area. Every act weakened the party favoring representative government. Within a year Rivière was ousted and a black general was ruling Haiti with a rod of iron. The Revolution of 1843 from which so much was expected had by its very success ruined the parliamentarians, for with power in their hands they showed themselves utterly inept.

175 A succession of black generals now came to the presidency. When
642 Faustin Soulouque became president in 1847, the fourth Negro
643 within four years, and made himself emperor two years later, Haiti
found herself once more back at the strong-man principle. The élite were out of office, relegated to inferiority in all phases of political life.

In the middle of the nineteenth century the groups upholding the
175 conflicting principles in politics became organized political parties.
665 Those favoring parliamentary rule called themselves Liberals; those
565 believing in the sole rule of a strong dictator were called Nationalists.
But by no stretch of the imagination could the Liberal party be considered democratic. The noble principles expressed in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the American Declaration of Independence were uncongenial to Haiti. One of the prime tenets of the Liberals, indeed, was that men were not created equal; rather that certain men (the élite) were clearly the superiors of others. Liberty

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[175] [11] The revolution was almost wholly an affair of the élite caste. The mulatto Boyer
[669] was deposed, and the mulatto Rivière Hérard took his place. If anyone thought of the peasants, it was only to use them to manipulate and manoeuvre the "outs" into office. Boyer's secretary-general, deposed along with the President, appealed to his countrymen against their accusation of treason against him, saying "My last wishes will be for the prosperity of Haiti and the regeneration of the African caste, to which I have consecrated myself wholeheartedly for forty years, without ever thinking of my own interests." (Joseph Balthasar Inginac, *Message à ses compatriotes, et principalement à ceux qui ont dirigé les affaires populaires de la république depuis la fin de janvier dernier* [Port-au-Prince, March 18, 1843], p. 6). Yet if these are more than hopeful words, they refer only to the distribution of the land which made peasants of the "African caste," and to Inginac's pamphlets on how to raise coffee and other products—which none of the peasants could read.

was well enough, but all upper-class landlords wanted the privilege 175
of living in leisure on an income derived from the menial labor of 665
black workers. Fraternity was a principle ridiculous to a group whose 565
never-ceasing struggle was to confirm the separation of castes. The term "Liberal," then, was borrowed not from the revolutionary documents of the late eighteenth century, but from the parliamentary parties of the nineteenth—those who saw more opportunity for themselves and their group if the power of tyrants and kings could be curbed by legislatures. The idea was particularly congenial to the Haitian intelligentsia for the simple reason that the powerful rulers of Haiti, past and present, were Negroes who did not share the aims and ideals of the social upper class.[12]

By holding such "liberal" views, the mulatto élite saw their one 175
opportunity not only for curbing the strong men among the Negroes 565
who again and again tried to rule Haiti as if it were a native African
state and themselves the supreme chieftains, but also for indulging 646
their own special penchants. A Senate filled with élite politicians 665
suited the talents of the educated aristocrats. They liked constitutions 664
and codes; the law was their favorite profession; they were adepts at drawing neat distinctions between this and that in an academic issue; polished oratory, skilful argument, fluent speech were knacks peculiar to them by temperament, position, education. Boyer had been the beau-ideal of the academic "liberals," with his talkative Senate, his complete set of Codes and national system of courts; the mid-century party members came to realize what they had lost by driving him out.

Every time the Nationalists came to power the colored élite 175
suffered. Under Dessalines they lost greatly in property and position;
Christophe had hated and hounded them; Soulouque put many of 661
their leaders to death. The only monarchs Haiti ever had were 565
blacks, and the two most tyrranical presidents in the first seventy-five 643
years after independence were Nationalists (Pierrot, 1845–46, and Domingue, 1874–76).

The experience of the Liberal presidents with parliamentary insti- 175
tutions was not entirely a happy one, however. Pétion and Boyer had 643

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[12] It must be recalled that no parliaments of England, France, or the United States [646]
in the early nineteenth century had true democratic representation. Property qualifi-
cations for voting, rotten boroughs, and the persistence of privilege assured that only [171]
the "classes" should have full representation, and so rule the masses.

Pétion and Boyer had

175 suavity enough to rule constitutionally with a Senate which, since
643 class interests were being served by the executive, did not curb their
646 virtual dictatorships. Later presidents had more difficulty. Geffrard,
642 for example, elected as a Liberal after the fall of Soulouque's grim empire, had made parliamentary government a battle cry of his campaign. In office, however, he was continually at loggerheads
[669] with his Senate, until he exercised his presidential privilege of dissolving it; in the end a revolution overthrew the Liberal parliamentarian because he had become a dictator. So with his successor Salnave (1867–69), likewise a Liberal, who almost immediately upon inauguration found it impossible to work with such a group of talkers. So once more with Nissage-Saget (1870–74), who followed Salnave: a professed believer in legislative responsibility, he refused to yield to the legislature on any important matter. A black Nationalist succeeded for two years, ruling despotically. Then came the last of the Liberal presidents, Boisrond-Canal (1876–79). This man was apparently determined to allow his legislature its full constitutional rights. As a result Haiti had more talk in the capital, and less action, than in almost any régime up to that time; then, as Montague says, "convinced that the constitutional régime was a failure, Haiti's most scrupulous president resigned in disgust."[13]

175 The Liberal party virtually disappeared from the scene in 1883,
665 after two abortive coups by their leader of the moment, Boyer
669 Bazelais. The first occurred in 1879 when the retiring President, Boisrond-Canal, gave Haiti one of her very rare honest elections,
[666] resulting in the choice of the Nationalist candidate Salomon. Bazelais and his men forsook their professed principles, rising in arms to seize power. They were suppressed. Four years later when the moment again seemed auspicious Bazelais led another revolution, which the President so effectively crushed that the leader himself was killed. The leaderless Liberals were no longer effective competitors in presidential politics. From that time until the American Occupation, the élite were out of power. One president only during those thirty-five years was a mulatto: Tancrède Auguste, one of the weakest rulers in Haitian history. He died, presumably poisoned, after eight months of office.

400 The era from 1883 to 1915 was Haiti's worst, politically. Revo-

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[13] Ludwell L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938* (Durham, 1940), p. 18.

The era from 1883 to 1915 was Haiti's worst, politically. Revolution succeeded revolution; the country sank deep into graft and scandal; foreign powers made Haiti debase herself before them. Some of the élite, backed by foreign merchants resident in the country, went so far as to urge annexation by the United States rather than endure continued disorder in economics and degradation in social life. They felt matters had come to such a pass that only so radical a change could clean the Augean stables. This was the period of a succession of political pamphlets[14] written by élite thinkers to set forth the necessary steps of reform. Every president was a black autocrat, holding power by his control over the masses. If an occasional one was more than mediocre (Hyppolite, for example), his good qualities were sure to be more than offset by the ignorant boors (such as Nord Alexis) who followed him. 175 669 668 648 642 643

True, even the most incompetent of the Negro presidents was obliged to employ a few élite, for literacy was necessary in the foreign office if nowhere else. The aristocrats were impotent, however, for Haitian problems had tremendously increased at the very period when they were losing control of government policy. Reforms were imperative, as every member of the élite knew; but no black president saw the need, or seeing it, had the vaguest idea how to proceed toward effecting them. Beyond the shameful disgrace of Haiti's position in the world of independent nations, the thoughtful could glimpse the anarchy which must inevitably result from continued ineffectiveness. 175 643 645 565 [648]

Reforms were not forthcoming. Rather, anarchy came, bringing international complications in its wake. The American Marines occupied the country. An era was ended. 175 642 648

It had been a strange journey in political ideas from the time of Pétion and Christophe to that of the Occupation. The early leaders seemed to envision triumphs for Haiti in a world of great powers, and to see themselves as men with a mission. After Boyer the vision dimmed. We have Soulouque, whose tinsel empire was mere stage setting for the act of a neighborhood bully; the tyrant Domingue; the senile Nord Alexis; the utterly incompetent fly-by-nights in the decade before the Occupation. Even Geffrard the reformer, prob- 175 643 000

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[14] Among the most lucid of these were: Démesvar Delorme, *La Misère au sein des richesses* (1873); Edmond Paul, *Les Causes de nos malheurs* (1889); Léonidas Laventure, *Haïti: le danger de la patrie* (1893); Alcius Charmant, *Haïti, vivra-t-elle?* (1905); and Auguste Magloire, *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social* (1909).

Even Geffrard the reformer, prob-

175 643 661 ably the ablest president in the second half-century, who was pledged to reduce the expenses of government (a promise which, since he was accustomed to a life of penury, should have been easy to fulfill), increased his own salary to $50,000 a year, and allowed himself $20,000 more annually for secret service and a similar sum "for the encouragement of arts and sciences." He bought two estates with government money; the meat bill of his family was charged to the budget of his bodyguard, and the family champagne bill to a hospital. After Geffrard, the presidency was openly regarded as the juiciest financial plum in Haiti which, if one could pluck it, would justify the necessary expenditures for a revolution. It seems from contemporary comment, indeed, that Geffrard's actions aroused not censure but rather envy, as if every ambitious Haitian would have welcomed the opportunity to do likewise. The bitingly critical Englishman, Sir Spenser St. John, railed with some justice, "Every Haitian appears fully persuaded that his countrymen never seek office except for the purpose of improving their private fortunes."[15]

175 643 646 The legislature was never a real check upon the President. It was useful to him at times when he wished to delay action on some embarrassing imbroglio with a foreign power, for by referring a measure to the Senate he could stall it in tedious debate. Almost without exception, however, the legislature consisted of the President's men. Its halls were palaces of idle oratory. One whole session was devoted to a discussion of fitting the hall with cushioned seats; another to the propriety of appointing an interpreter for representatives who understood only Créole and not French. To make a man a Senator was a satisfactory way of paying a political debt. To be a Senator was to have social prominence, a salary of $1,600 (decidedly a competence in nineteenth-century Haiti), an opportunity to speak before an audience—and no real responsibility.

178 One may grant without debate the difficulties facing this small and poor country, a Negro state with great white neighbors who regarded it with something less than deference. Yet Haiti in its early days had real promise. Wherein lay its defects? Haitian thinkers knew the answers, and frequently indicted themselves.

175 871 565 658 The want of education was a basic weakness. Those who believe in democracy need no rehearsal of the benefits of popular enlightenment. Because the great Negro heads of state were themselves im-

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[15] *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, p. 185.

175 whites patrolling the streets seems to have given reality to criticism
665 which before then would have been academic. The élite were back
208 again in the political forum. Unreflecting patriotism urged the
648 immediate withdrawal of the Marines, but a considerable number of the legislature saw that it would be years before they left. The problem, then, they saw variously: some wished to be eloquent spokesmen for the patriotic anti-whites and did their best to embarrass the Occupation; some, feeling that the Americans were benefiting the country, tried to make things move smoothly; while others, seeing a fertile field for gain, tried to ingratiate themselves with the American authorities.

175 The twenty years between 1915 and 1934 heard many eloquent,
643 impassioned speeches, not all of them coming to the same conclu-
642 sions. The élite were divided in most issues raised by the Occupation,
648 so that the old neat dichotomy between élite and army no longer
662 prevailed. The President, Dartiguenave (1915–22), was for the first
time since 1879 a Southerner and a mulatto; yet in 1922 when he was a candidate for reëlection it was Southern élite votes which defeated him. Executive, legislature, and judiciary all had just enough power under the Occupation to make subtle manoeuvres, and all three branches of the government displayed a real genius for the political game. They often succeeded in putting the onus of an unpopular act upon the Americans, and in taking the credit for popular measures with which they had had little to do. They prodded and pricked all the weaknesses in the logic of the American State Department. They forced numerous concessions. If at times they seem to have been overclever, playing the game of politics merely for an opportunity to display their skill, at other times many of them showed a deep understanding of realities which had to be faced.

175 The Occupation, ordered by that high prophet of democracy,
648 Woodrow Wilson, professed its determination to give Haiti her
666 first opportunity to be democratic. Yet the Marines really dictated
642 the choice both of Dartiguenave in 1915 and of Borno in 1922 and 1926. The constitution of 1918 was prepared in Washington; it was submitted to a plebiscite, but the farcical vote—69,337 for and 335 against—was clearly the result of electioneering by the Marines. The presidents of Haiti ruled with executive councils, subject to Ameri-

can "advice and approval," rather than with the legislature subject to 175
popular control. Even under such restrictions the politically minded 648
found ways of exerting pressure on the Marine authorities. 666

Out of the darkest days of military subjection by a foreign power 642
came a changed order of politics in the country. The practically unbroken 175
line of dull incompetents who had come into the presidency 643
ended; instead of ignorant army leaders, educated men were once
more in office; instead of Northern Negroes, élites of Port-au-Prince;
instead of benighted martinets bewildered by world affairs, men
who, if not great statesmen, at least had minds capable of understanding
Haiti's relation to international economics and politics.

The élite were back in power. In the mind of every friend of Haiti 175
arose the question whether the events between 1879 and 1915 had 642
taught them lessons which would make their return to responsibility
productive of great things for the country. Because of the abnormal
situation resulting from the Occupation, the world depression, and
the briefness of their new ascendancy, one cannot yet speak with
assurance. Nevertheless, there are few encouraging signs. Political [661]
office is still regarded by most candidates in terms of their own
advancement rather than service to Haiti. Very little has been done [666]
to extend the base of voting by developing local responsibility and [565]
education among the masses. Élite youths still receive a classical
education, still disdain manual labor, still cherish the ideal of a
graceful life of ease. The president still rules as an autocrat supported [643]
by the gendarmerie—substitute for the army of former days. One
can see no decrease in social distinctions or in the disdain of the élite [565]
for peasant people; on the contrary, there has even been an increase
of this feeling because the Occupation (through its Agricultural
Service particularly) seemed to open paths of development to the
peasants. Social antagonism, not social responsibility, still underlies
political life.[20]

To every one of these strictures there is a plausible reply. It is no 178
light matter to unsettle the minds of nine tenths of a population by 65
education, to cause an economic revolution by improving agricultural
techniques, to admit to political life a people unaccustomed to

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[20] Dr. Jean Price-Mars, in *La Vocation de l'élite* (Port-au-Prince, 1919), *passim*, [114]
especially pp. 51 ff., urges the élite to accept their responsibilities rather than rest upon [565]
the debilitating assurance of their innate superiority.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966

SV3 Haiti SV3

178 it. Moreover, the Haitian budget is in the neighborhood of seven
65 million dollars, for which sum not much in the way of great improvement for three million people can be expected. The task of regenerating Haiti calls for self-sacrificing genius—at present the élite hardly qualify either as self-denying servants of the public or as geniuses.

175 Haitian affairs during the 1930's were under the direction of
President Sténio Vincent, an able man to whose credit much can be
● 643 said. He devoted himself to his task with assiduity, talking face to
642 face with the peasants in Créole, urging them to assist in reforestation
648 and to use wisdom in crop rotation. He settled serious disputes with
241 the neighboring Dominican Republic in amicable fashion. It was he who carried on the delicate and successful negotiations with President Roosevelt to give Haiti control of her own affairs once more. In coffee culture, assistance to trade, financial matters, and other economic details, he often proceeded expertly, particularly in view of the world depression which began as he assumed office. On the other hand, Vincent made the legislature his servant rather than a partner. He was a dictator (fortunately a benevolent one) who changed the constitution by highhanded methods in order to gain his own reëlection. His régime rested upon his alliance with the efficient Garde d'Haïti. There were few signs of democracy or of respect for civil liberties, as Americans understand those terms, in Vincent's eleven years.

175 The spectator has a feeling that he has seen all this before, when
643 for example Geffrard was elected to assure parliamentary government, only to become an effectively benevolent dictator as soon as the legislature opposed him. Geffrard was on the whole a good president, as Vincent was; but the former did not succeed in setting Haiti upon the path of economic and social security, and one hardly dared expect it of his modern counterpart.

175 In April, 1941, Élie Lescot, former Haitian Minister to the United
643 States, was elected as the thirtieth president of the republic. Vincent
had refused to call a plebiscite to approve an extension of his presi-
48 dential term for an additional five years, as he had done in 1935 near the end of the six-year term to which he was elected in 1930. Lescot had begun his presidency with many advantages, chiefly the friendly support of his predecessor, his acquaintance with United States officials, and a recent negotiated pact by which American aid will

be given to Haiti for vast rubber plantings."[21] Opposition to Lescot comes chiefly from those who consider him too friendly with the Dominicans who killed hundreds of Haitian workers in 1937, Lescot having figured prominently in negotiations that led to the Dominican government's agreement to pay indemnities to Haiti for the slaughter. 175 643 648

Reviewing the whole course of Haitian history, the field of politics seems to have marshaled itself behind a few regularities. In every case there have been voices raised to protest, yet the ruling clique, whatever its grouping, has effectively supported these characteristic political customs: 642 105

1. Complete dominance of political life by the president. Strong men seem to be necessary to rule ignorant masses. Even the revolutions precipitated by parties campaigning for parliamentarianism have, when successful, become governments by the president. This concentration of power in one man's hands makes the next revolution possible, for it is easier to overthrow one man than to eliminate a party based upon wide suffrage and diffused responsibility. 643 642

2. The inferior position of cabinet ministers. These have resembled neither European nor American secretaries of state in their responsibilities, but have been little more than clerks appointed by the president to serve as heads of a bureau. The treasurer-general, for example, during most of Haiti's history has merely received the moneys, while the president disbursed them. The secretary-general has neither originated nor conducted the details of public policy. Often as not, the minister has made a convenient whipping boy when the president has got himself involved in internal or foreign complications: by demanding the minister's resignation the president remained unscathed. 645 642

3. The unimportance of the legislature. It has made useful patron-

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[21] The European War, threatening the supply of rubber coming to the United States from British Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies, has made the American government seek new sources. The Department of Agriculture established an experimental station and breeding gardens for rubber plants in Haiti, and the results were so successful that extensive areas were planted with rubber trees. Haiti and the United States in May, 1941, reached a long-term agreement for "the development of agriculture and economy"; the projects embraced under the agreement include not only rubber but the further development of Haiti's banana plantations, the planting of oil crops, drug plants, spices, fiber plants, the stimulation of handicraft industries, and the development of forestry resources peculiar to the tropics. A further extension of an additional $500,000 in credits will be made for use on highways, irrigation projects, and to provide transportation facilities for the areas to be planted to rubber trees. 249 433 654 648 [312] [491]

3. The unimportance of the legislature. It has made useful patron

646 age for the president to dispense, and has preserved the semblance of
642 republican government; but hardly half a dozen legislative sessions
in all Haitian history have contributed seminal ideas in politics or
initiated true reforms. How could they, indeed, when the president
was consistently a dictator of policy?

666 4. The undemocratic nature of the vote. Senators are chosen by
the representatives, and the two groups together have generally
642 elected the president, when he did not come to power by revolu-
tion. The only chance people have had to vote has been for local
officials and representatives. In these cases, the vote has been limited
to the élite and the army, with the president's henchmen counting
the ballots. Since the Occupation there have been plebiscites on
constitutional changes, the people having the right to vote Yes or No.

692 5. The subservience of the courts to the president. They have been
filled with president's men, generally astute enough to consult presi-
● 643 dential wishes before handing down a decision. Foreign merchants
642 soon learned that they could expect little "justice" from the courts if
their own cause conflicted with special Haitian interests. Foreign
diplomats likewise learned that in crises the courts could involve the
simplest issue in such verbal complexity that months of patience
would be necessary to unwind the red tape.

641 6. The pliability of "constitutional rights." Freedom of speech and
661 of the press has been notably lacking, although scurrilous attacks on
the administration's enemies have often been permitted. Legislators
642 have been expelled. Graft has flourished. In 1833, for example, two
representatives were expelled from the House "for systematically
opposing the measures of the executive, and persisting in a demand
for a statement of public expenditures." A century later a senator was
expelled for almost the same reasons.

701 7. Militarism. Only in this respect is any real change apparent since
178 the American Occupation. The army was always large up to 1915,
and so constituted an economic drain as well as a political menace.
642 Generals had great power: they ruled each department and each
669 arrondissement, were subject only to the president, and were at the
bottom of every revolutionary movement.[22] Since the Occupation

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[22] In 1842, when the population was still less than a million, there were in the district governments 9 generals, 63 colonels, 48 lieutenant colonels, 9 captains, 1 lieutenant, and 28 medical officers; and in the standing army 33 colonels, 95 lieutenant colonels, 825 captains, 654 lieutenants, 577 sublieutenants and ensigns, 6,815 noncommissioned officers, and 25 medical officers. The army had 28,000 soldiers and cost about $600,000 a year. See John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 86 ff.

175 642 put little stress upon strictly legal marriage, he did try to foster family ties and to strengthen family life.

1806. Pétion's first constitution, drawn up with his fellow mulattoes. [643] Taking his model from the United States constitution, he established a republic with a president and a legislature, although the president of Haiti had greater relative powers than the president of the United States. He might be reëlected, but was not to be a dictator.

1807. Christophe's reply to the mulattoes, establishing the "state" of Haiti which should (he hoped) overwhelm the "republic" of Haiti. His political and social systems were in few respects different from those of Toussaint and Dessalines.

1811. Christophe's second constitution, establishing his kingdom and creating a nobility, but otherwise maintaining the forced-labor system.

1816. Pétion's second constitution, the longest-lived in Haitian history. Having been several times reëlected president he now adopted the principle of a life presidency, with the right of the incumbent to name his successor. The legislature and forms of a representative republic were retained.

1843. The completely unrealistic constitution of the young revolutionaries who succeeded in overthrowing Boyer. The fight of the anti-Boyeristes had been for effective parliamentary government; to that end they provided for the direct election of the president by the people, a democratic vote, the exercise of legislative power by the Chamber of Representatives and the Senate, and the subordination of military to civil authority. Such democracy was too radical for either élite or army to endure, and this constitution was shortly superseded.

1846. Riché's return (in most respects) to the constitution of 1816. He kept the principle that the president should be elected, not appointed for life by his predecessor; but the election was by the combined Senate and Chamber, rather than by democratic vote of the people.

1849. Soulouque's constitution, founding his personal and gaudy Second Empire.

1859. Geffrard's return to the Pétion constitution of 1816, as revised by Riché in 1846, with a few details added to meet changes in social conditions in the last decade.

1867. Salnave's modifications of the constitution of 1859. The parliamentarians were in control once more, and inserted the require-

175 ment that two thirds of the members of either Chamber must be
642 present before a law could be voted—a stipulation making it possible
[646] for any clique to hold up legislation by absenting itself.

1874. The constitution of Domingue who, having defeated the
[643] Liberals, promulgated a constitution "profoundly modifying" the
language of the 1867 document. It legally concentrated power in the
hands of the president—where, indeed, it had always been in spite
of constitutional declarations.

1879. Salomon's first constitution, which professed to be a reexamination of Haitian institutions, but was actually not different in essentials from the document of 1846. The line from Pétion to Riché to Salomon and his successors was the main one from which deviations, such as those of Soulouque, occurred.

1886. Salomon's second constitution, a mild revision of his first.

1889. Hyppolite, the new president, felt it necessary to have a new
[178] constitution, although like the constitution of 1886 this was little
more than a revision of that of 1879. Under the 1889 document
Haiti continued to function, more and more haltingly, up to the
time of the American Occupation.

[648] 1918. The constitution drawn up in Washington[7] and forced
through in Haiti by a farcical plebiscite. Its most debated provision
[423] was the elimination of the prohibition against ownership of land by
foreign whites, thus ending the one common point in all previous
constitutions since 1805. For the rest, it changed little of the actual
[641] structure of Haitian government, but provided a great number of
unaccustomed democratic rights: freedom of assembly, trial by jury
in political cases, direct election of senators, submission of amendments to popular vote, freedom of the press.

1927. Although this is considered merely a revision of the 1918
[641] constitution, its changes were actually more noteworthy than many
expected by the so-called new constitutions. Thirteen amendments
were carried by popular vote, again so overwhelming as to be
ridiculous, restricting many of the democratic liberties granted in
1918 which had proved embarrassing both to President Borno and

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[7] Franklin D. Roosevelt, in his campaign for the vice-presidency of the United States in 1920, claimed that he had written most of this constitution while he was Woodrow Wilson's assistant-secretary of the navy. (See the *New York Times*, August 19, 1920.) The constitution was approved in Haiti by a vote of 69,337 to 335.

to the Americans who ruled Haiti through his office. This constitution 642 once more increased the power of the president. [641]

1932. Vincent's constitution, professing to be quite different from the two in effect during the Occupation, but actually closely resembling [643] the 1927 revision with its concentration of power in executive hands. In 1935 an important amendment was added, making it possible for the president to be reëlected.

Despite this welter of constitutions, the essential framework of 642 Haitian government has consisted, except for brief interruptions, of 643 a president, a legislature, and courts. The term of the presidency has varied from four to seven years (in the early days, for life) with the privilege of reëlection being now forbidden, now granted. Two presidents who tried to extend their terms, Salnave and Salomon, were deposed by revolutions for their temerity. Their distinction of being among the few to serve out the allotted term was thus marred by an ignominious end.

Regularly the president was obligated to "maintain internal peace" 643 —a requirement few heads of state have been able to carry out, since internal peace has been most elusive. To aid him in his task he has [701] been given wide powers: he commands the army (always large until 1915; every president except one between 1804 and 1915 was a [706] general) and the navy (never more than a few ill-conditioned vessels, [716] but these important in the general roadless condition of the country); most constitutions also gave him the right to issue necessary proclamations in order to deal with special crises. He "watches over" [792] tribunals by means of appointed commissioners; by this arrangement he may obviously exert pressure for favorable judgments in cases which interest him.

The one body which might conceivably check the president, 643 namely, the legislature, has generally been composed of the president's [646] men, for the Senate has usually been elected by the lower house from a list of candidates proposed by the president, while the representatives would hardly dare defy the man who controlled the army (which presided over such elections) and could dissolve the legislature. [646] By most of the constitutions the president proposed to the legislature all laws except those concerning taxation; even here, since he directed the receipt and issue of public moneys, he was not really limited. Over foreign affairs the executive had effective control by

643 reason of his power to name agents accredited to foreign governments; with the approval of the Senate he made treaties and wars. In cases of malversation, or gross corruption, the president might be denounced by the Senate (his own nominees), and the High Court of Justice (his own appointees) would sit in judgment on him; matters [669] have never reached this pass, however, for the Haitian method of checking a president's "malversation" has been the more direct one of revolution.

643 At a salary generally set in the neighborhood of thirty or forty [465] thousand dollars the president could live luxuriously, the highest-paid person in Haiti. The salary combined with the prestige and [661] perquisites of office was enough to explain the eagerness with which men sought the position. "Perquisites" often enough included graft.

645 Details of administration have been in the hands of various departments of state, their number depending upon the constitution then in force. As has been said, the president generally regarded his cabinet members as little more than clerks to attend to details. Only a few in the whole nineteenth century stand out prominently as directors of policy—Boyer as Pétion's secretary-general; Inginac, holding the same position under Boyer; Anténor Firmin, Hyppolite's foreign secretary; and a handful of others. During the four years, 1843–47, of "ephemeral governments" the cabinet ministers sometimes managed to rule their offices, and under the succession of ignorant Negro generals at the end of the century, if the educated élite secretaries had not taken charge of affairs no one would have handled them. Constitutional language made the cabinet officers seem more important than they were, however, for the actual position of a minister was usually that of head clerk, chief errand boy and handy man for the president, and convenient scapegoat when crises arose in foreign affairs, finances, public works, or other spheres.

646 The legislative body has ordinarily consisted of two chambers, the Senate and the Chamber of Representatives. Senators must be thirty years old. They have ordinarily served a nine-year term, being available for reëlection only after three years out of office. The method of choice curbed their power: the lower house selected each senator from a list of three nominated by the president for each vacancy. For a salary of sixteen hundred dollars and freedom from arrest in civil cases, all the senator had to do was to correspond with the president and lower house on public affairs, and decree appro-

Patrick Henry, Randolph, and Samuel Adams as well. Madiou estimates 175
that there were 52,500 men in the army in 1804, when Haiti's 701
population was less than 400,000.[12]

Fear of the return of the French kept the army large, and the 175
administration of agricultural affairs under both Dessalines and 712
Christophe was in charge of it. The construction of a fortress in every 466
district put laborers under the direct influence of the military.[13] In [705]
addition to the corvée, or forced labor, required to construct these
fortifications, the workers of the nation in the time of Dessalines also
had to clear the hillsides and the ravines connecting valleys, and
plant them with bananas, yams, plantains, and other provisions to
supply the garrisons which manned the forts.

The Emperor left his army to feed and clothe itself. Occasional 175
rations were given as a part of wages, but they were irregularly 705
distributed. In the South particularly the troops began to murmur 701
and desert, stirred up by their mulatto officers who were themselves
no better rewarded, and who were already beginning their plot to
overthrow the Emperor. The accusation was made that the money
which should have gone to the army was being used on Dessalines'
mistresses. The soldiers indulged themselves in that most damaging
of Haitian weapons, the witty song, full of double meanings but
deadly in its thrust at public personages; by these symbolic songs the
fall of Dessalines was not only predicted but actually prepared.

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Christophe kept a military state, but he had learned many lessons 643
from watching affairs under Dessalines. Realizing that he could not 701
trust the preservation of his régime to the fickleness of an army which 625
had seen his rise to power and had already deserted its first commander
in chief, knowing too that there was treason even among his
own guards, he made a contract with a company of foreign merchants
for the transportation of twenty thousand blacks from Africa.
These were to make up a military force independent of the Haitians,

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[12] *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 122.

[13] Each general was commanded by Dessalines to build a fort on one of the mountains in his district. The design seems to have been left to the general. A few of the [712] fortifications were truly impressive. Christophe built La Ferrière near Milot in the North; Pétion the fortress of Jean-Jacques at Grand Fond, four leagues from Port-au-Prince; Capoix called his Les Trois Pavillons, in the range of mountains back of Port-de-Paix; Cangé and Yayou together built Campan near Léogane; Magloire Ambroise constructed a fortress near Cap Rouge and called it by that name; Geffrard built Platon near Les Cayes; Férou built Mafranc near Jérémie; François began but did not finish Le Bonnet Carré near Aquin.

643 and being the personal property of the monarch and recipients of his
701 royal favor, were to constitute the perpetual support of his throne.
625 Only four thousand of these compulsory immigrants came, but
625 Christophe made them into very effective companies of police, whom he named the Royal Dahomets from the country of their origin. They performed the duties of a gendarmerie in all the districts of the North, drove the cultivators to their labors, watched over property and the security of the proprietors, and maintained industry and a strict subordination among all ranks of people in the kingdom.

175 Christophe's regular troops were well clothed and armed. They
701 were kept under stern discipline, no mercy or relaxation being
[703] shown them; delinquency on their part brought flagellation or a military execution. The troops received only a nominal stipend, and each soldier was required to gain his subsistence by cultivating a few acres of ground allotted to him out of the national domain. The usual quarter of this income had, of course, to be turned over as a tax to the state. Although the King's power was maintained by soldiers, he never coddled them. "The soldiers of the army as well as the laborers of the plantations lived in perpetual dread of the rod of authority," wrote Brown.[14] They seem to have developed a tradition of some special fetish power possessed by Christophe, a sort of *mana*, to use anthropological terminology. Even princes and dukes were chastised by the King's orders, and then made to do menial work by way of further punishment.

Conditions in the republic of Pétion were similar and yet different —similar in that soldiers formed the support of the government, different in that Pétion did not rule by fear. Every individual man between 16 and 60, a few cultivators excepted, was required by law to be a soldier, either in the *corps solde* (regular troops of the line), or in the *corps non solde* (national guard). The former, both under Pétion and in the early days of Boyer, had about 40,000 men distributed in strong detachments in towns and communes all over the
[714] country. Their costume, instead of being neat, uniform, and daily inspected as with Christophe's army, was ragged and mismated; they managed according to popular parlance "to find linen on every
[465] hedge." They were paid from fifty cents to a dollar a month, ac-
[541] cording to the existing solvency or exigency of the state. Each week
[512] end a parade and review was held, and then a small fatigue party was taken to do actual duty, the others being dismissed until the next

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[14] *Op. cit.*, II, 209.

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policy of encouraging trade with his friends and prohibiting it with 175
his enemies—both arbitrarily. The variation of Pétion was a sort of 439
mercantilism, with set high tariffs.

What Dessalines planned was in terms of Western statecraft so 175
weird that white onlookers felt they were restrained in calling Dessa- 177
lines a transplanted African tribal chieftain. So passionately intense 643
was the fury of that general against all whites that he took every 655
precaution he could devise to prevent face-to-face dealings between 466
his Haitians and foreigners. By deceit, treachery, and ingenious 439
cruelty he conducted a massacre which deserves comparison with
that of Saint Bartholomew: this effectively rid the country of white
residents. Since for a time Haiti would have to depend for economic [166]
survival upon trade with foreigners, Dessalines next conceived a [24]
project whereby the whole population would be gathered in the
centre of the island, in the most protected valleys and the gorges of
the highest mountains. In these fastnesses the people would never
see a white but would work on the land, producing sugar and coffee
and cotton for export without ever leaving their local habitations.
On the seacoast would be established certain "counters" over which
a few incorruptible Haitians, chosen by the Emperor himself, would
sell local products and buy the necessary imported goods. Impreg- [712]
nable fortresses were to guard access to the interior,[a] which would
be reached by new roads from the seacoast "counters." Every seaport [491]
was to be destroyed as soon as new towns could be built in the back [504]
country. Already when his death intervened Dessalines had moved [361]
his capital from the Cape (that is, Cap-Haïtien, formerly Cap
Français) to the inland village of Marchand (in the department of the
Artibonite; now renamed Dessalines), and his next plan was to
transfer Port-au-Prince eight leagues inland to the plantation
Dérance, among the mountains.

Dessalines has been thought absurd, childish, barbaric. But there is something poignant, even tragic, in this fiery determination of the black chieftain, bitter over the cruelties and indignity to which his people had been subject for decades, to use this alien island as best he could and preserve his people at any cost from such another domination.

Despite his scheme for ultimate isolation of the people, Dessalines 175
kept everyone steadily at work by the forced-labor system instituted 466
under Toussaint.

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[a] See p. 247 and note 23.

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441 Justice in the courts was administered by Haitians whose narrow patriotism biased their decisions.

439 648 5. A temperamental tariff policy. Not only were imports subject 175 to a tariff which might be changed at the whim of any president, but exports also were taxed. 651 When an administration was in need of funds it might suddenly, without warning, raise the tax on coffee 489 exports and so disrupt a merchant's business plans. The customs-houses were in charge of Haitians who steadily became more inefficient and grasping as the century progressed, until many foreign merchants felt that the only way of getting business dispatched was by means of bribes. Examinations at customs were long drawn out, often there was open thievery, and erroneous valuations were common.

175 6. The burden of the indemnity to France. Contracted by Boyer 657 in 1825, this annual payment for sixty years was an incubus to every [648] administration, leaving no surplus in the treasury for public works, education, or any internal development; likewise, it made the threat of foreign interference all the more imminent.

7. A debased currency. Pétion was the first president to devalue money, and his example was frequently followed thereafter. Counterfeiting was general. When a country's monetary system is unstable, its officials accustomed to bribery and graft,[17] and its financial structure almost nonexistent, there is little chance for sound economic development.

175 8. Dependence upon a single crop. 245 Haitian economy was tied to the staple coffee, grown with indifferent care, prepared for the market in outmoded fashion, and sold in competition with coffee from more scientifically run plantations in other tropical countries.

175 9. Political instability. 439 The recurrent revolutions in Haiti made foreigners chary of participating in the country's business, since the 66 government which made a contract might be out of office before the ink was dry.

175 10. Indifference of the élite to economic pursuits. 439 What profits were obtainable went into the pockets of foreign merchants, not 565 those of Haitian businessmen. In 1842 the comparative exports of the

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[643] [159] [661] [17] Sir Spenser St. John, always a bitter critic of Haiti, remarked (*Hayti, or The Black Republic*, p. 88) sardonically that "Boyer had the rare quality of being honest, and left in the treasury, on his departure, the sum of £200,000, the first and last chief who was ever guilty of so unaccountable a weakness."

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[p. 315]

NOTES

CHAPTER II

The period between 1789 and 1803 may be summarized as follows: 175

1789–1791. Struggle for precedence between whites and free colored people, with the balance in favor of the whites. [565]

1791–1793. The slave insurrection, with consequent anarchy, and futile attempts of French commissioners to restore order. Both whites and colored people pushed into the background. [669] [563]

1793–1796. Invasion of the colony by English and Spanish; rise of the mulatto general Rigaud and the black general Toussaint. [648]

1796–1799. Consolidation of power by Toussaint; defeat and expulsion of Rigaud; emigration of whites. [643]

1799–1802. Toussaint in full power as governor-general.

1802–1803. Leclerc's expedition, with its initial successes and ultimate failure. Final achievement of Haitian independence under Dessalines and Christophe. [642]

PART III

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Various efforts were made by American abolitionists working with Haitian presidents to colonize freed American Negro slaves in Haiti in the period before the Civil War.[1] All these projects came to unfortunate ends, some even to grimly tragic ones. During Boyer's time about 13,000 American Negroes went to Haiti, the government assigning to each family a portion of land upon its arrival. Very shortly most of those who could afford it returned to this country, and within ten years hardly one was still living upon the land. An American writer, Hunt, says that during his seventeen years in Haiti (before 1860) he had known of but 13 Negroes from America who had been moderately successful; of these, 7 were merchants or traders, 4 mechanics, and 2 lawyers; and all were mulattoes. Five others were barely independent, and all the rest were day laborers or worse. In spite of this, Hunt planned another aided migration of American Negroes to Haiti. Warning them not to expect too much in the way of improvements in agriculture, he adds a significant paragraph: "Should the immigrant obtain quiet possession of unoccupied lands, and begin to use the plough instead of the hoe, his new methods of culture would be likely to draw upon him the jealousy and ill-will of his neighbors. For when new ways are *too* new to be accepted as an example, they are very apt to be felt and resented as a rebuke. More than one of Boyer's old immigrants have told me that they were obliged to give up agriculture and take to trading in towns, on account of annoyances of this sort. They found their fences down, or their water let off, of a morning; or evidences that cattle had been fed on their grounds over night; or the neighboring idlers, of which there are many, had stolen all their plantains and sweet potatoes, fit for the market. I do not mean to say that here Haytian cultivators are worse than any other rude people. On the contrary, I

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[1] An excellent description of these projects is found in L. L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938* (Durham, 1940), chap. IV.

175 563 believe they are less bad than many, others in like circumstances. For not having great strength of character, they have neither great virtues nor great vices. The English farmers, Birkbeck and Flower, encountered similar troubles, and worse, when, forty years ago [that is, between 1820 and 1830], they brought over their English habits, and settled down with them among our farmers in Illinois."[2]

Montague sums up the general fate of American Negroes who migrated to Haiti by saying that some were exploited by the élite (who treated their own blacks in the same fashion), others persecuted by resentful peasant neighbors, and still others, who had expected manna to fall from the Haitian heaven, simply disillusioned at having to work, and so lost heart.[3]

CHAPTER XII

175 643 The following table of the presidents of Haiti summarizes in general the shifting political fortunes of the country. Those presidents who belonged to the élite caste are designated with an asterisk (*). It will be noted that the presidency has generally been in the hands of men from three departments: the North, where Negroes are predominant even among the leaders; the South, always a stronghold of the mulattoes; and the West, where the capital, Port-au-Prince, is located. The Department of the Northwest has never had a president, and the Artibonite only three. The color of the presidents is indicated.

Heads of State	*Color*	*Dates*	*Department*
1. Dessalines	Black	1804–6	North
2. Christophe	Black	1807–20	North
2. *Pétion	Light	1807–18	West
3. *Boyer	Light	1818–43	West
4. *Rivière-Hérard	Light	1843–44	South
5. Guerrier	Black	1844–45	Artibonite
6. Pierrot	Black	1845–46	North
7. Riché	Black	1847–47	North
8. Soulouque	Black	1847–59	West
9. *Geffrard	Dark	1859–67	South
10. *Salnave	Dark	1867–69	North
11. *Nissage-Saget	Light	1870–74	Artibonite
*12. Domingue	Dark	1874–76	South
13. *Boisrond-Canal	Light	1876–79	South
14. Salomon	Black	1879–88	South
15. Légitime	Black	1888–89	South
16. *Hyppolite	Black	1889–96	North
17. Simon Sam	Black	1896–1902	North
18. Nord Alexis	Black	1902–8	North
19. Simon	Black	1908–11	South
20. Leconte	Dark	1911–12	North

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[2] Benjamin S. Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans*, pp. 14, 11.

[3] *Op. cit.*, pp. 71–72.

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Heads of State	*Color*	*Dates*	*Department*
21. Auguste	Light	1912–13	North
22. Oreste	Dark	1913–14	West
23. Zamor	Dark	1914	Artibonite
24. Théodore	Black	1914–15	North
25. Guillaume Sam	Black	1915	North
26. *Dartiguenave	Light	1915–22	South
27. *Borno	Light	1922–30	West
28. *Roy	Light	1930	West
29. *Vincent	Light	1930–41	West
30. *Lescot	Light	1941–	North

Summarizing this table, it can be seen that of the 31 heads of state only 13 have definitely belonged to the élite group. A few of the others might, by stretching the category, be regarded as members of this group. These 13, however, have governed for a total of 87 years, as compared with a rule of only 64 years by the representatives of the army clique. (It will be remembered that from 1807 to 1820 Haiti was separated and so had two heads of state.)

There have been 14 Negro rulers, 11 mulatto presidents, and 6 presidents who had at least a slight degree of white blood.

Of the 31, 13 represented the North (Christophe is included in this number, although he was born on the island of St. Christopher, from which he took his name); 8 came from the South; 7 from the West; 3 from the Artibonite; and none from the Northwest. The Northerners were in control of the government for 42 years; Southerners for 32 years; Westerners for 69 years; and the Artibonite presidents for less than 6 years.

CHAPTER XIV

1. *Taxation*

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The formative period of Haitian history, it is now evident, was between 1807 and 1820, when the young country was offered two sets of policies, generally opposed, to choose between: Pétion's and Christophe's. It is likewise clear that, since Pétion's required less discipline and self-restraint, and the country became reunited under Pétion's adoring secretary, Boyer, the easier path of Pétion was the one generally followed.

This choice is abundantly clear in the matter of taxation. Although the civil war between the two rulers was draining his treasury, Pétion either did not care or did not dare to tax his people. He relied rather upon heavy duties on trade in his ports, thus embarrassing commerce and taking away much of the profit from coffee. Christophe, on the other hand, without a scruple got millions by a tax on production amounting to one quarter of the annual crops of his kingdom;[4] consequently commerce in the North was free and that part of the island busy with prosperous trade. Christophe also taxed his nobles, charging a heavy fee for a patent of nobility, and also receiving annually a fourth of the crops raised upon their estates.

[4] Copied from the practice of Toussaint and Dessalines.

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3. *Pétion, Boyer, and Inginac as Administrators*

Pétion lived very simply in the South, like a plain republican magistrate. He sat 175
on his piazza, accessible to all his people. He had a quiet way of answering his 843
opponents which did not make enemies of them. He made his secretary answer 159
every letter that arrived, no matter how small; many were simply inquiries about
the President's health. Yet the wars between Pétion and Christophe dragged on [669]
from 1807 to 1812,[8] draining the finances of the republic. Not only the crops
declined: so also did most of the public improvements instituted by the colonial [458]
planters; so did trade; so did habits of industry. Everything seemed to conspire [249]
against hard work. The rich plains of the Cul-de-Sac and the Artibonite Valley
were ravaged by fire and warfare; necessary equipment for sugar making was [464]
destroyed, the money for new machines and buildings was unavailable; and the
men were drawn away from their land by military duties.

Inginac, Boyer's secretary of state, after the Revolution of 1843 had got rid of both the President and his secretary, wrote his memoirs. There are some revealing passages. Inginac reports that Pétion told him only forty days before his death that Boyer was a man of probity and delicacy, "but unhappily he is petulant; he is too set in his ways to conciliate those who might assist him. In everything *he* wants to
dominate, and he will bring unhappiness to the country if he does not change." [466]
Inginac cites cases to show that Pétion's prophecy was correct. Boyer in 1820 repealed the most unpopular laws, particularly those requiring personal corvée and the repair of public roads; but instead of taking advice from his cabinet on important economic matters, he frequently announced that he was president and would not be run by anybody. Consequently, according to Inginac, he made mistakes which might have been avoided.[9] Defending himself, the former secretary offers a clue to the failure of the régime—possibly unavoidable—by showing that the administration merely suggested, did not require, action:

> "Have I not constantly, not only preached and corresponded about the necessity [464]
> of making agriculture prosperous, but also given work at as high wages as the [214]
> treasury could afford? Have I not created habitations on lands formerly totally
> uncultivated, putting formerly idle men to work? Have I not published at my own [311]
> expense, although I directed the National Printery, methods for cultivating tobacco
> and coffee plants, of which I distributed gratis several thousand copies?"[10]

In spite of all encouragement which the administration could offer, agricultural 433
production continued to decline, while expenses increased, and external trade fell 439
off from a third to a half. The government had to borrow from the banking firm 652
of Lafitte in Paris to find even the interest for

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[8] Hostilities between the two parts of Haiti ceased about 1812 because of the [175]
mutual fear on the part of Christophe and Pétion of Napoleon's ascendancy, and the [669]
threat which this constituted to the whole former colony. Their war had ravaged the
plantations and removed laborers from the soil. Then came the War of 1812 between [648]
the United States and Great Britain, cutting off many of the supplies which Haiti
drew from both countries. There was accordingly an unwritten truce, with no further [728]
hostilities. A neutral territory of ten leagues between the boundaries of the two states
was tacitly agreed upon: neither army was to enter it. This was the rich plain of
Boucassin, once the garden of the island, now a wilderness.

[9] Joseph Balthazar Inginac, *Mémoires* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1843), pp. 32, 34, 38.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. [illegible].

payments due to the French government.